プアプアLIPS

1

poor poor lips

hayako goto
後藤羽矢子

BAMBOO COMICS
TAKE SHOBO

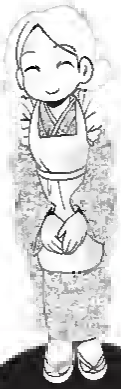
BAMBOO COMICS

poor poor lips 1

Hayako Goto presents

poor poor lips

characters



watase
渡瀬

Born on 10/30. Blood type A. Age unknown. Ren's housekeeper. She's looked after Ren since she was young, since Ren's parents were so busy. She's more of a watcher than a doer.

okashi-nako
大河岸ナコ

Born on 8/16. Blood type O. Twenty-one years old. She's been living in poverty since her parents passed away, but she's upbeat and easygoing.

* Nako's name is a play on words. It sounds like "A strange/funny girl" (okashi na ko?).

furui-keiki
古井圭樹

Born on 4/3. Blood type A. Twenty-one years old. He went to high school with Nako. He works hard as a pastry chef for his family's patisserie. Has been worried about Nako for a long time now.

* Keiki's name is also a play on words: it sounds like "cake."

otsuka-ren
大塚レン

Born on 2/26
Blood type AB. Age unknown.
Her parents are wealthy—apparently they manage a number of companies. The store she runs actually belongs to them. She's never known hardship in her life, so she's lacking in some areas.

プアプア 1
poor poor

and pick up some job listings.
Well, I'll head to the convenience store...
カチ カチ
CLACK CLACK

went under...
This recession is hitting everyone hard...
The store I was working for

LAPIS LAZULI

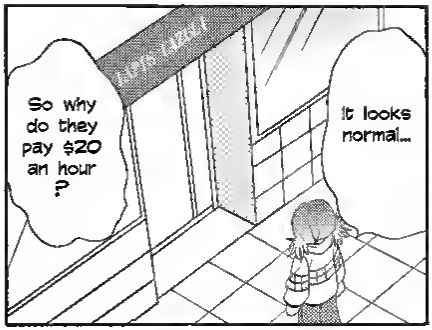
WHEN THE STORE HAD TOO MUCH OF SOMETHING...
AND MY BOSS WAS SO NICE, TOO. HE GAVE ME STUFF ALL THE TIME

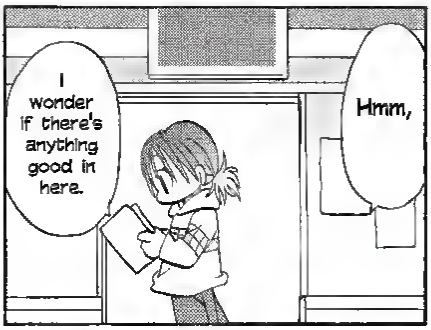
All Natural Pink Tourmaline Bracelet
It will bring you happiness!
$340

Here, take these.
ホラ〜
BEAM

THEY MUST BE PRETTY HAPPY ALREADY...
IF SOMEONE CAN AFFORD THAT BRACELET,

I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE
ボカ〜
HAZY


So why do they pay $20 an hour ?
It looks normal...

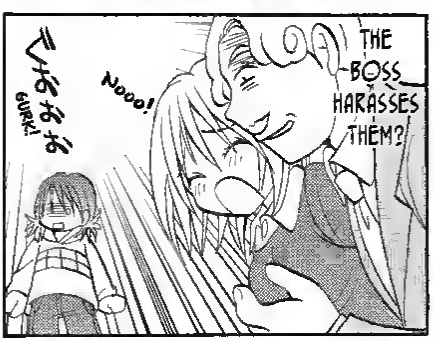

I wonder if there's anything good in here.
Hmm,

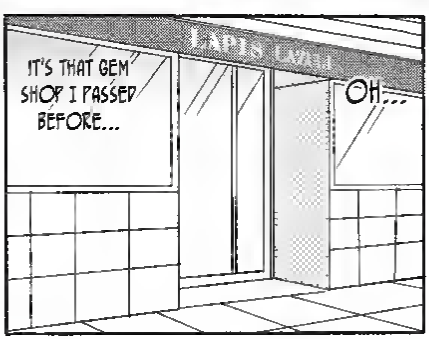
DO THEY MAKE THEM WEAR SUPER-SHORT SKIRTS?

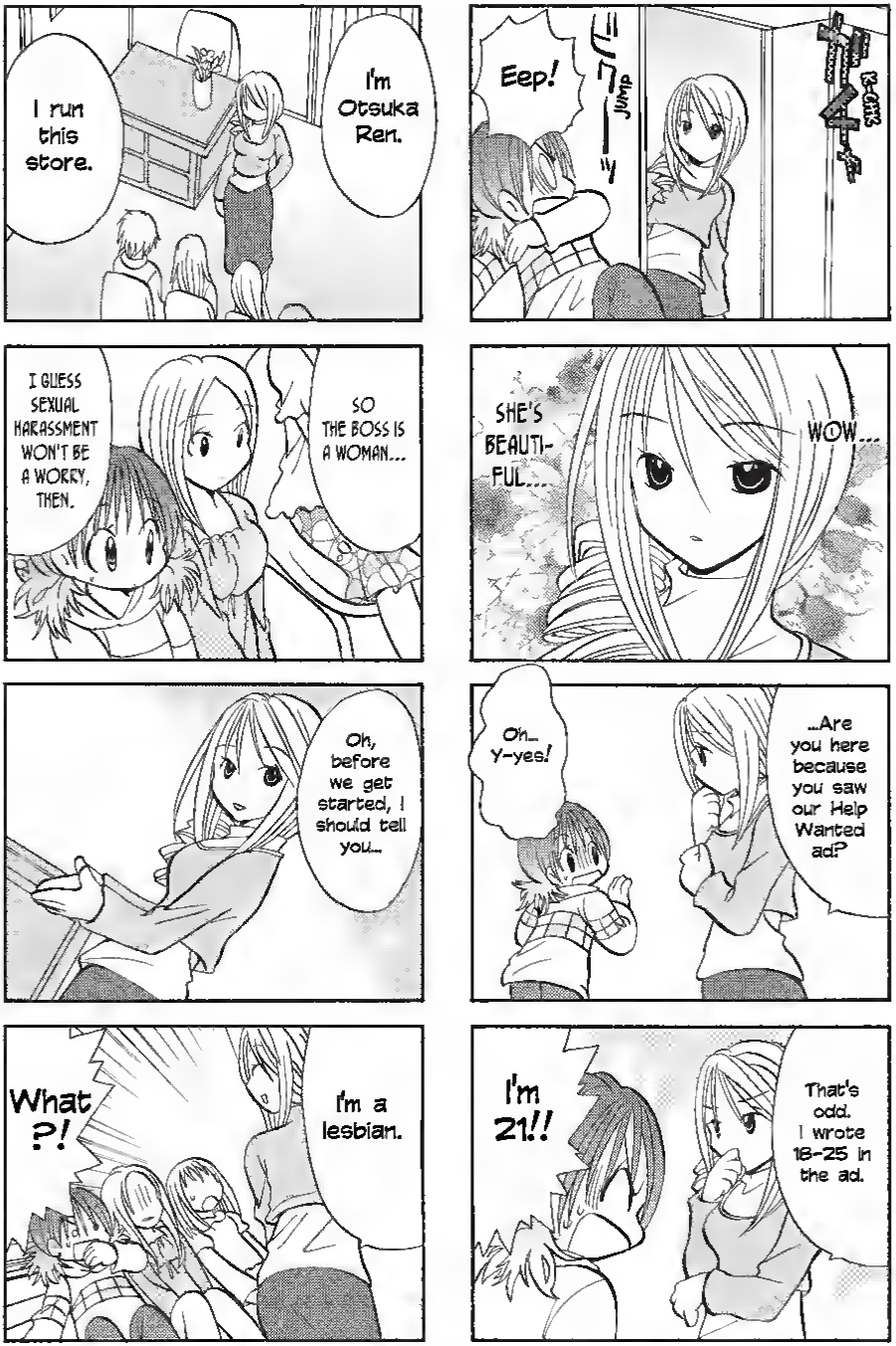
PEEK
Sales Staff Wanted
Looking for women between the ages of 18-25.
$20/hr

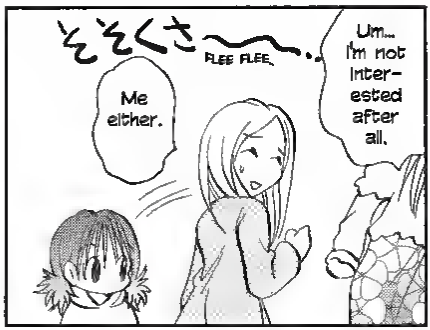
OR ...
Please take it from in here.
OR ...

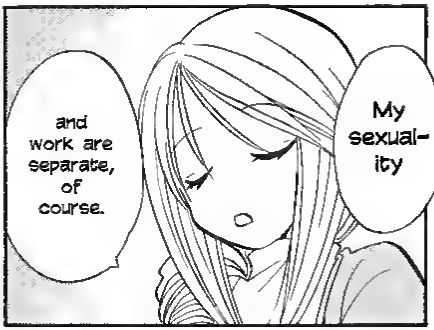
What is it, a brothel ?!
WORK TOWN
T-twenty dollars an hour ?!!


THE BOSS HARASSES THEM?
NOOO!
GURK!

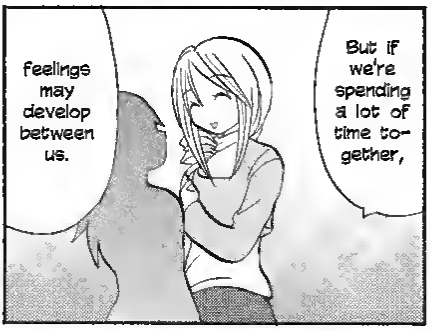

IT'S THAT GEM SHOP I PASSED BEFORE...
OH...


I'm Otsuka Ren.
I run this store.
Eep!
ミシ
ミシ
ミシ
SO THE BOSS IS A WOMAN...
I GUESS SEXUAL HARASSMENT WON'T BE A WORRY, THEN.
WOW...
SHE'S BEAUTI-FUL...
Oh, before we get started, I should tell you...
...Are you here because you saw our Help Wanted ad?
Oh... Y-yes!
I'm a lesbian.
What?!
That's odd. I wrote 18-25 in the ad.
I'm 21!!

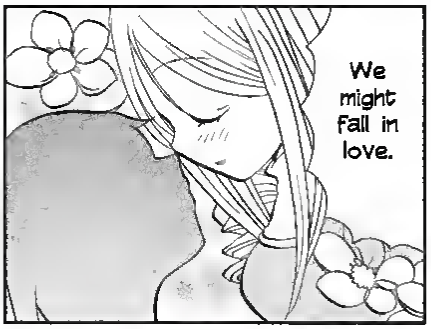

そそくさ～～～
FLEE FLEE
Um... I'm not interested after all.
Me either.


My sexuality
and work are separate, of course.

Aren't you going to leave too?
Oh...


But if we're spending a lot of time together,
feelings may develop between us.

Well, you haven't told me the specifics of the job yet.


We might fall in love.

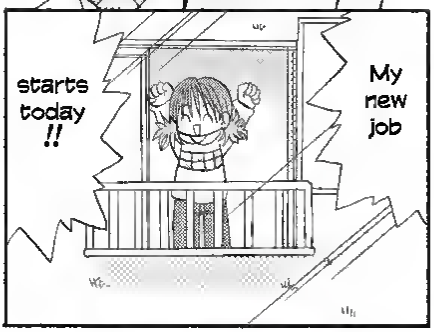
I figure I could still leave after that if i want to.

ザワザワ
MURMUR MURMUR
Please consider that possibility before you make your decision.

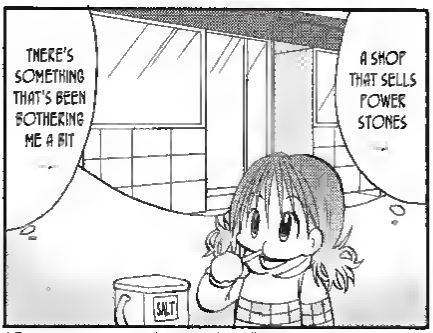
Your job is to keep the shop clean
and deal with customers.
.....
You're the first one who's ever said that.
You'll have to learn the names of all the stones we sell, and what they do.
Whoa...
The others were all scared off so easily...
But that isn't a $20-an-hour job.
It isn't? I don't know the going rate.....
I do have standards, you know. I don't go after every woman in sight.
I... I see.
How about $30 an hour, then?
No! That's even worse!
And you're DEFINITELY not my type, so don't worry.
SMILE
A bit hurt
O-oh.

I'VE NEVER HAD ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE.
No, I'm not.
Are you wealthy, by any chance?
.....
K-CHK
My family is middle-class.
Looks like you're enjoying your food.
You know what? I like you.
Whoa!
Miss, it's time for lunch.
You're hired!
I can't wait to start working with you.
I KNEW IT! SHE'S LOADED!
Thank you for the food.

プアプア 2
poor poor



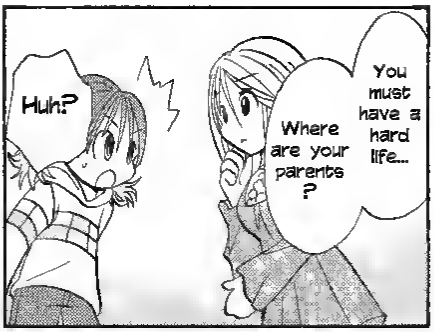
* Pastries shaped like akebia fruit with red bean paste inside



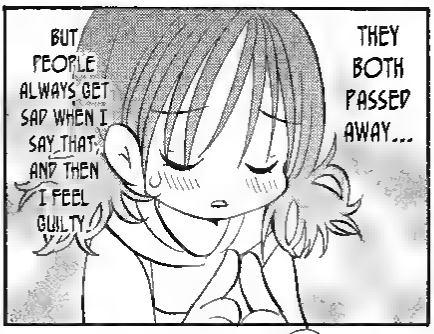
* Power stones are gems that are traditionally used for good fortune or prosperity

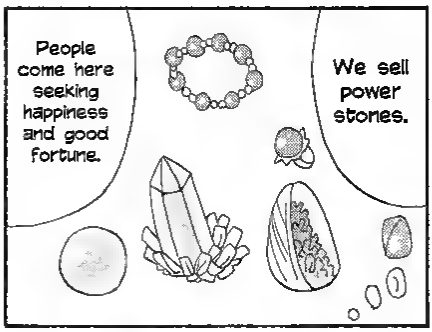
One dollar?!
I got it for a buck at a flea market.
Morning.
Good morning!
Five years?!
But it's falling apart, since I've been wearing it for five years now.
Oh! Yes.
.....
Aren't those the same clothes you had on yesterday?
Oh, this and that.
What did you patch it with?
Oh... no.
Is this sort of crude patchwork in fashion now?
It's just patched up.

Huh ?!
... Well, once we've closed up the shop for the day, let's go buy you some new clothes.

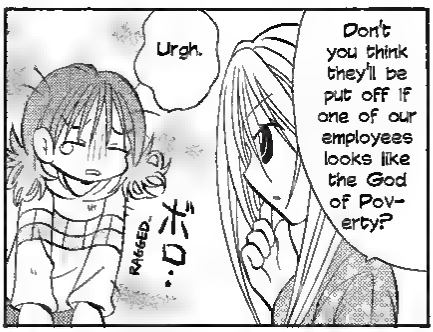

Huh?
Where are your parents ?
You must have a hard life...

It's not charity!
I didn't tell you all that because I wanted your charity!


BUT PEOPLE ALWAYS GET SAD WHEN I SAY THAT, AND THEN I FEEL GUILTY.
THEY BOTH PASSED AWAY...

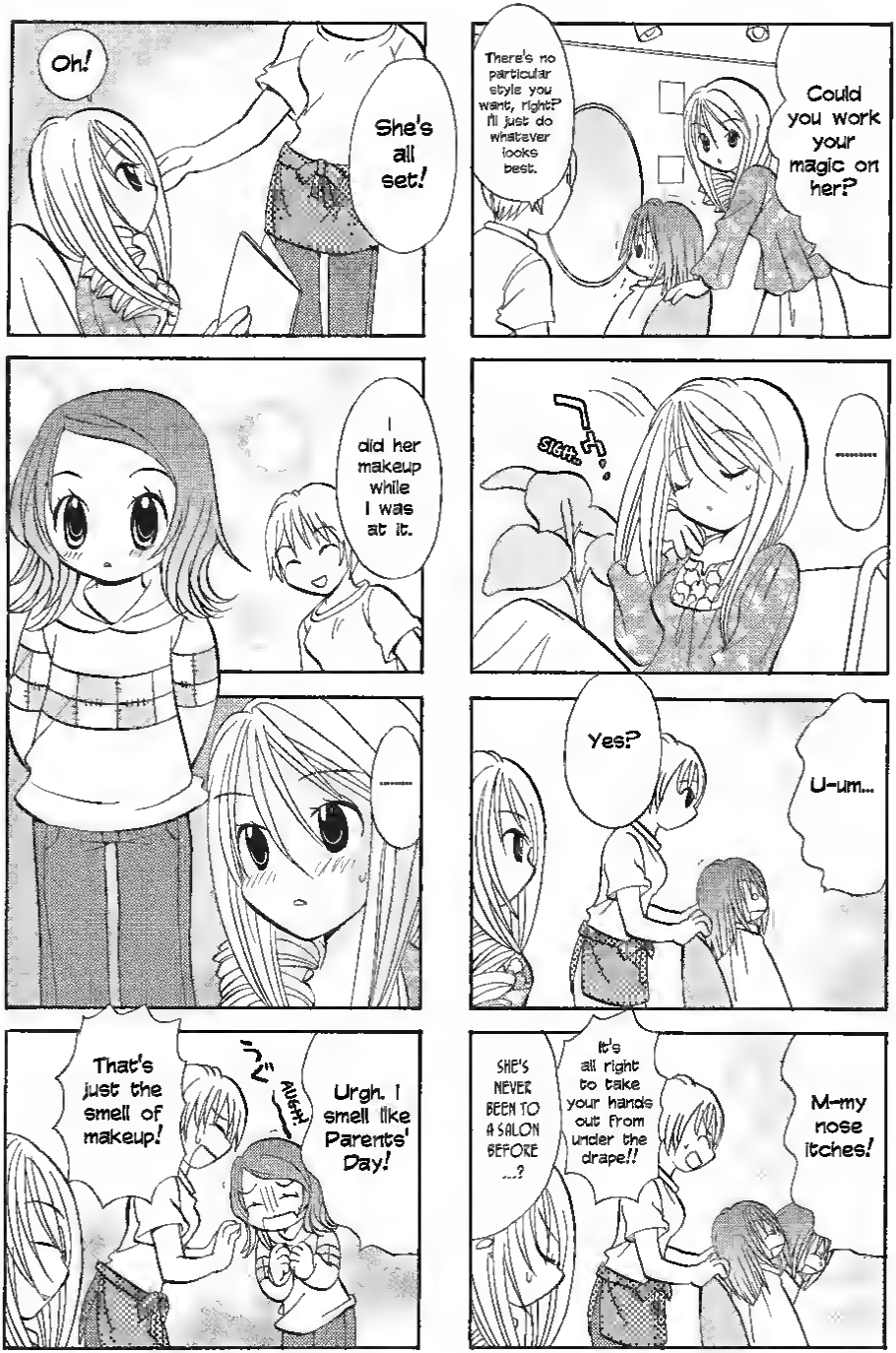

People come here seeking happiness and good fortune.
We sell power stones.

They're stars in the heavens now! ☆
SO I'LL BE UPBEAT ABOUT IT...
Aha!

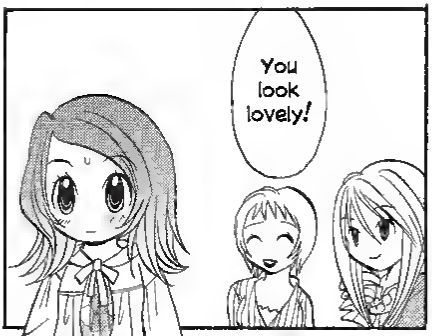

Urgh.
Don't you think they'll be put off if one of our employees looks like the God of Poverty?
RAGGED.

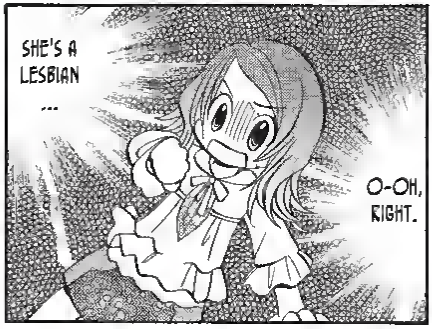
Urgh ...
WAG
WAG
You shouldn't speak that way about your parents' deaths!

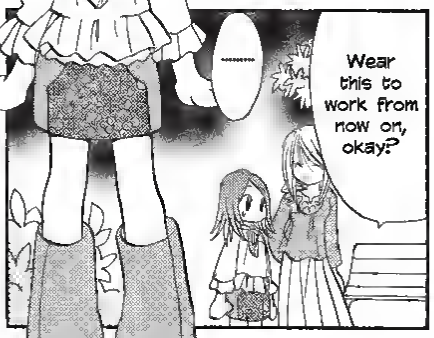
haircuts cost money, y'know?
Oh... um,
ミリミリ TREMBLE TREMBLE
This is my favorite store.
it's hard to reach the back,
So i just cut it myself.
It's hard for me to picture what clothes would look good on you.
Hmm... With that hairstyle,
BEEN!
so i do it while it's up. That's why it ended up like this.
...Huh?
Would you put your hair down instead?
DRAG DRAG
We're taking you to a salon first!
Is that what's in style these days?
SLANT
Why is it so uneven?

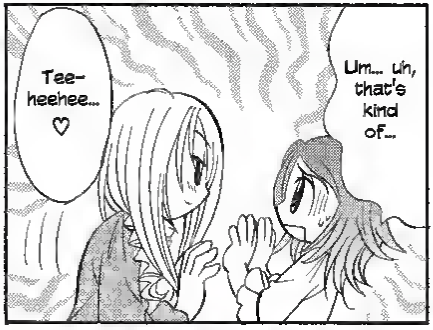

Oh!
She's all set!
There's no particular style you want, right? I'll just do whatever looks best.
Could you work your magic on her?
I did her makeup while I was at it.
SIGH...
.....
.....
Yes?
U-um...
That's just the smell of makeup!
ACHOO!
Urgh. I smell like Parents' Day!
SHE'S NEVER BEEN TO A SALON BEFORE ...?
It's all right to take your hands out from under the drape!!
M-my nose itches!

maybe you can pay me back with your body, then.
Well,

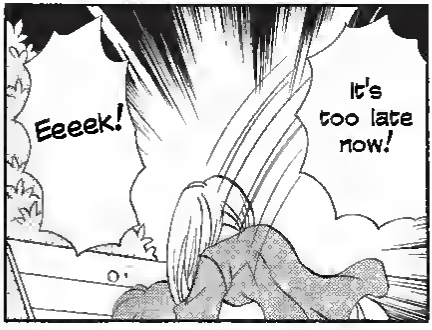

You look lovely!

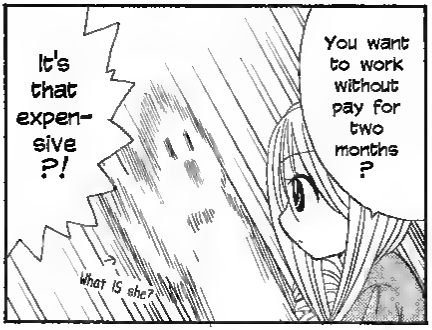

SHE'S A LESBIAN ...
O-OH, RIGHT.

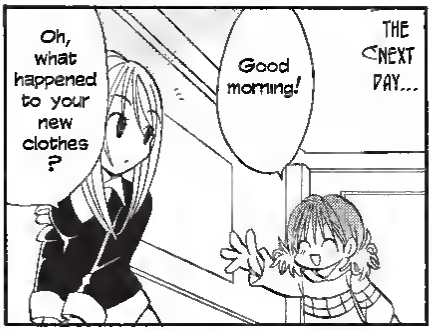

.....
Wear this to work from now on, okay?

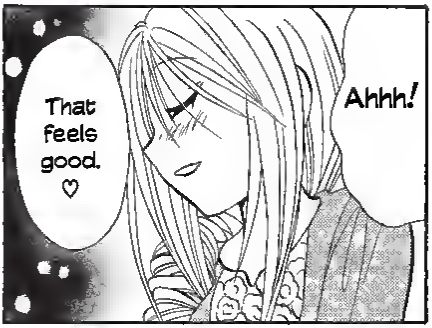

Tee-heehee... ♡
Um... uh, that's kind of...

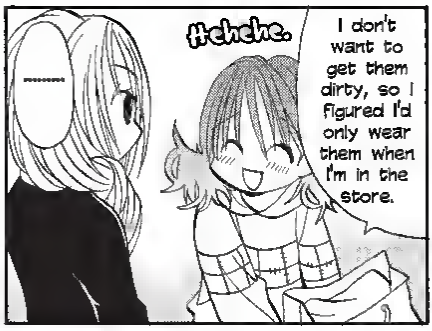
I'll pay you back when I get my next pay-check!!
Um... I really can't accept such an expensive gift.

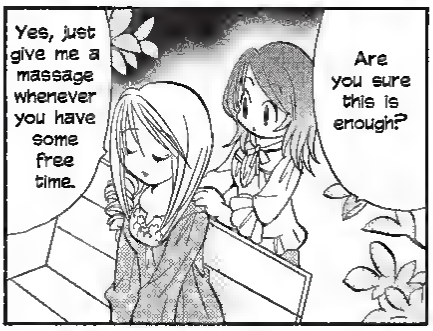

Eeeek!
It's too late now!


It's that expen-sive ?!
You want to work without pay for two months ?
What is she?

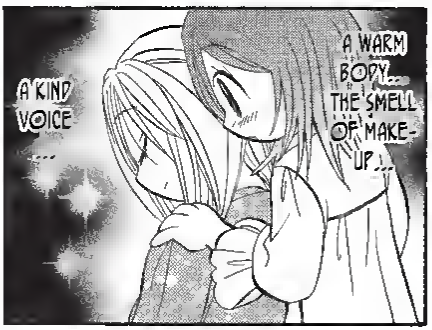

THE NEXT DAY...
Good morning!
Oh, what happened to your new clothes?

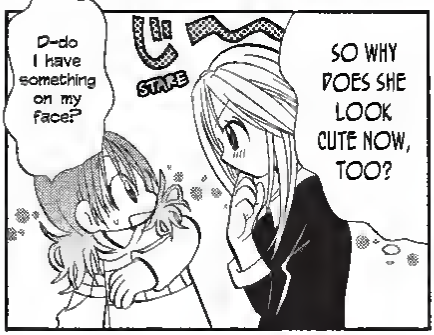

Ahhh!
That feels good. ♡

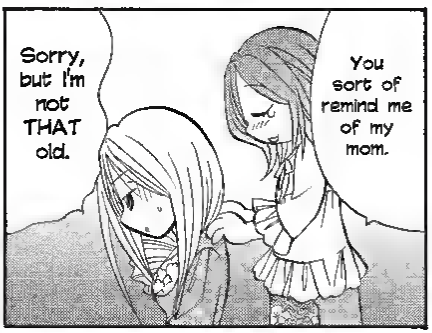

I don't want to get them dirty, so I figured I'd only wear them when I'm in the store.
Hehehe.
.....


Are you sure this is enough?
Yes, just give me a massage whenever you have some free time.

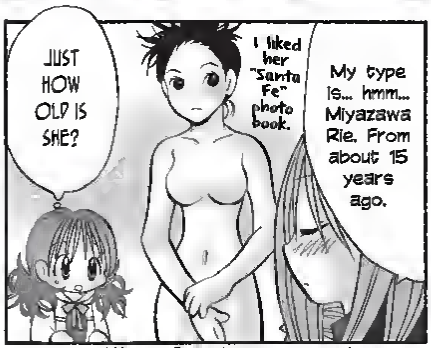
I THOUGHT HER CUTENESS YESTERDAY
WAS BECAUSE OF HER NEW LOOK...

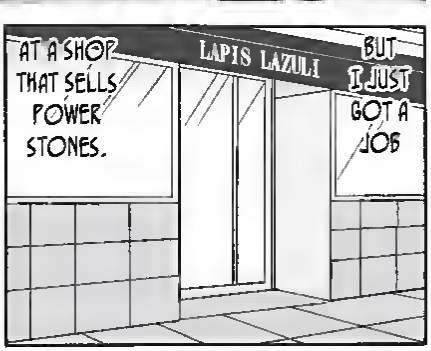

A WARM BODY... THE SMELL OF MAKE-UP...
A KIND VOICE ...


SO WHY DOES SHE LOOK CUTE NOW, TOO?
STARE
D-do I have something on my face?

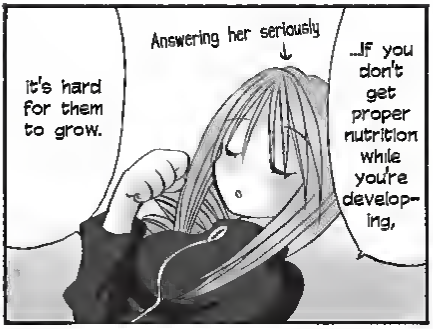

You sort of remind me of my mom.
Sorry, but I'm not THAT old.

プアプア 3
poor poo

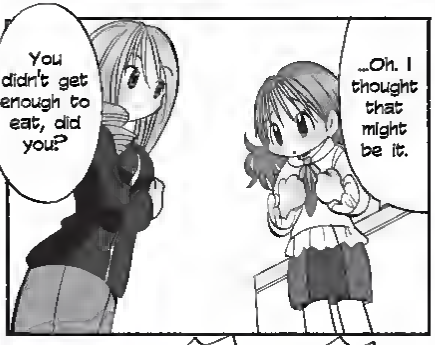




* Miyazawa Rie is a Japanese actress and former model


Answering her seriously
it's hard for them to grow.
...If you don't get proper nutrition while you're develop-ing,

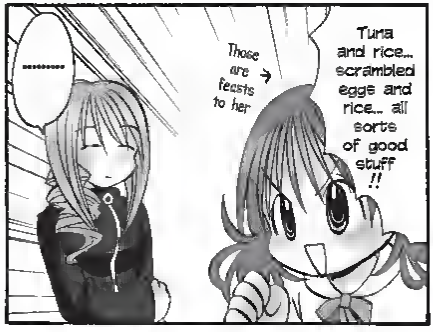
I think so. For the most part, any-way.
So, do you have everything down now?

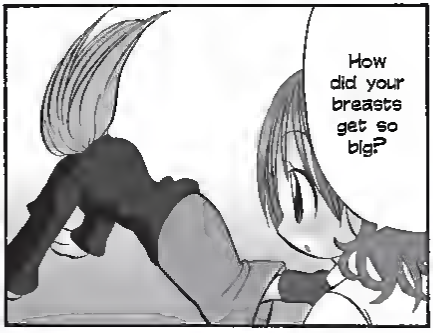

You didn't get enough to eat, did you?
...Oh. I thought that might be it.

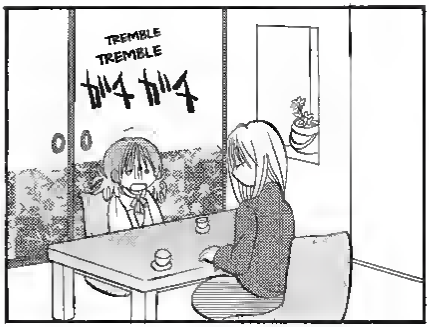
don't hesitate to ask.
All right. If you have any ques-tions,

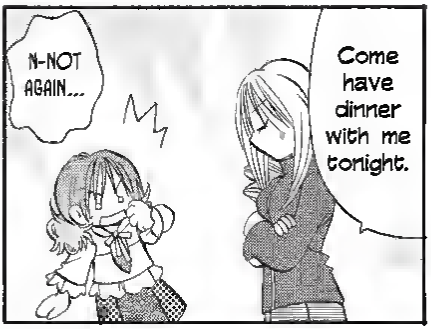
No, I had plenty to eat !!
I DON'T WANT HER TO GO OUT OF HER WAY TO HELP ME AGAIN.
GASP !!

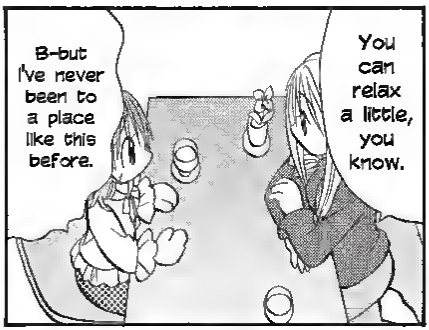
Yes?
I have a question!

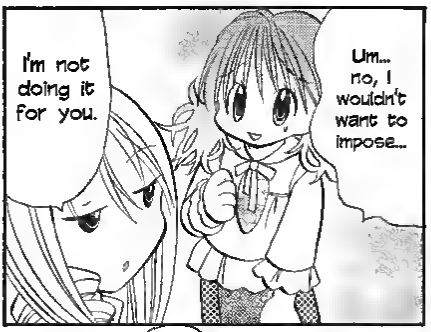

.....
Those are → feasts to her
Tuna and rice... scrambled eggs and rice... all sorts of good stuff !!

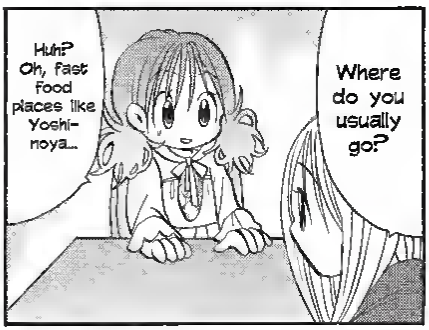

How did your breasts get so big?


TREMBLE
TREMBLE
カサカサ

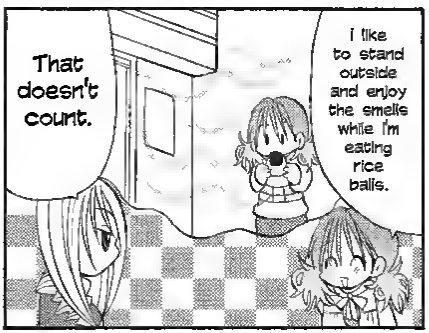

N-NOT AGAIN...
Come have dinner with me tonight.

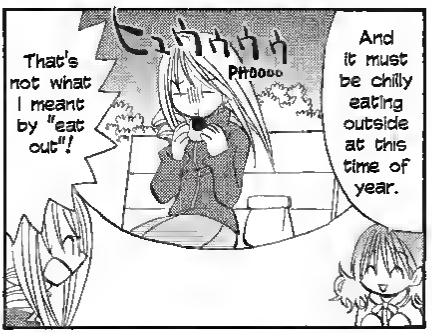

B-but I've never been to a place like this before.
You can relax a little, you know.


I'm not doing it for you.
Um... no, I wouldn't want to impose...

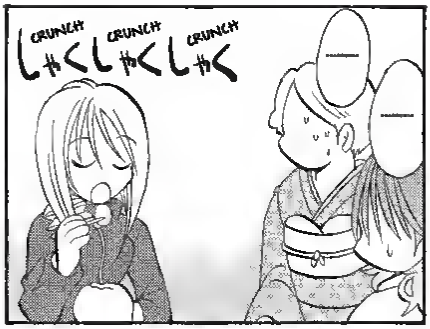

Huh? Oh, fast food places like Yoshi-noya...
Where do you usually go?

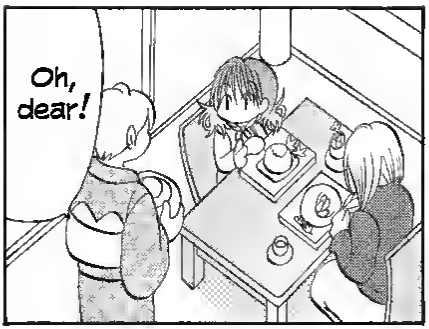
Oh!
but it's lonely going all by myself, you know?
I want to eat out to-night,


That doesn't count.
I like to stand outside and enjoy the smells while I'm eating rice balls.


That's not what I meant by "eat out"!
ﾋｭｳｳｳｳ
Phoooo
And it must be chilly eating outside at this time of year.

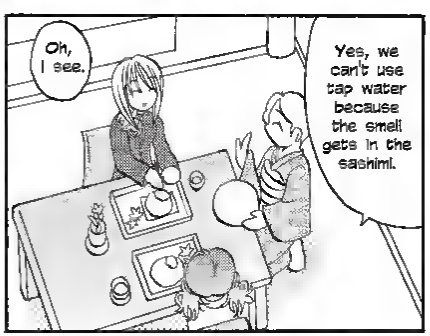
Your sashimi, Miss.
.....
Here's your appetizer--lily bulbs with chrysanthemum dressing.
SHAVED ICE... RIGHT?
THIS IS...
THAT I CAN'T TELL WHETHER IT'S GOOD OR NOT.
...TH-THE FLAVOR IS SO SUBTLE...
I SHOULD ADD SOME FLAVOR...
トニー
POUR
Y-yes, it's delicious!
Is it good?
GASP
しゃくしゃくしゃく
CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH
.....
Everything tastes good when you're hungry!


CRUNCH
しゃくしゃくしゃく
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

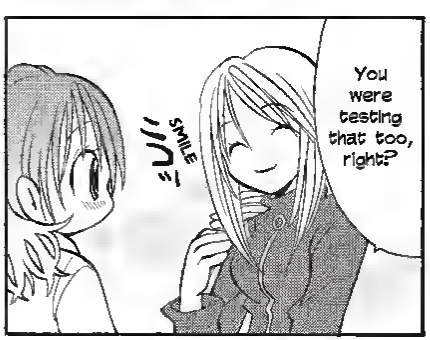

Oh, dear!

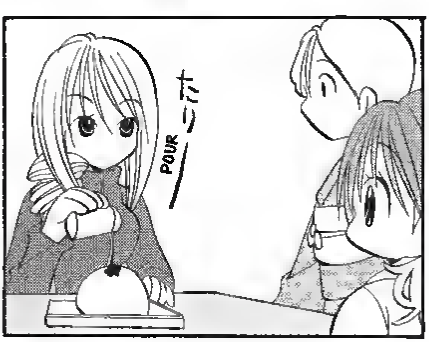
Oh!
This ice
is quite good.

That's just to hold the sashimi, Miss. It's not meant to be eaten.

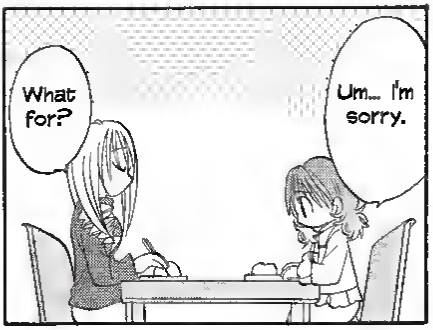

Oh, I see.
Yes, we can't use tap water because the smell gets in the sashimi.

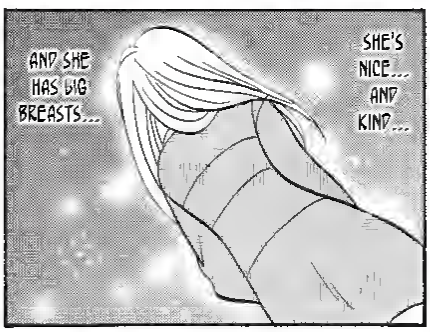
I MUST BE EMBARRASSING REN-SAN, TOO.
EEP! I REALLY SCREWED UP THIS TIME...


SMILE
You were testing that too, right?


POUR

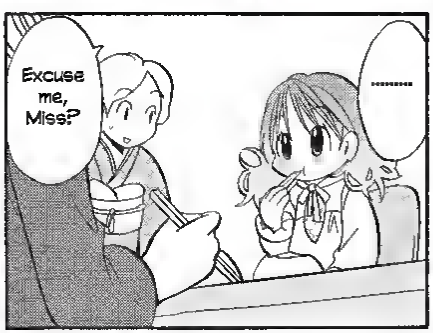
REN-SAN IS SO GROWN-UP...

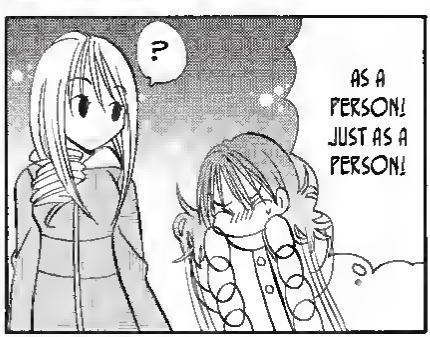

What for?
Um... I'm sorry.

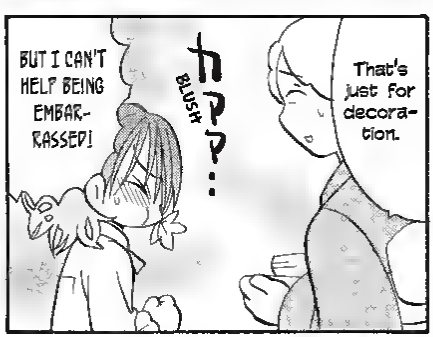

AND SHE HAS BIG BREASTS...
SHE'S NICE... AND KIND...

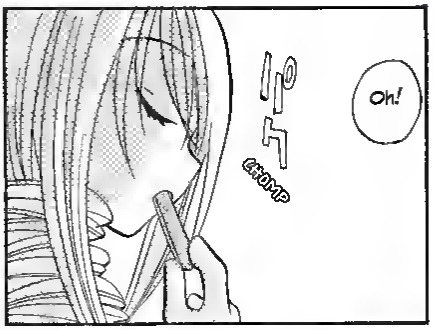
You should eat it however you like. Don't be asham-ed.
Food is meant to be enjoyed.

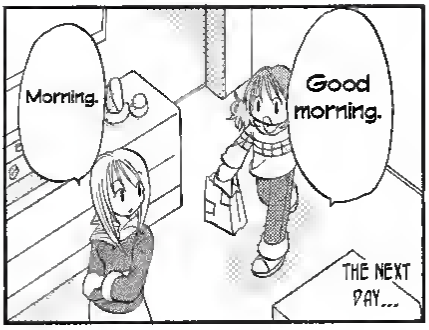
GASP
I... LIKE HER.


Excuse me, Miss?
.....

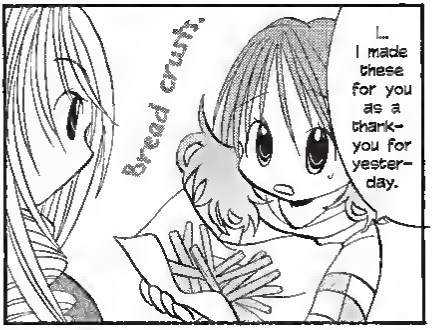

?
AS A PERSON! JUST AS A PERSON!

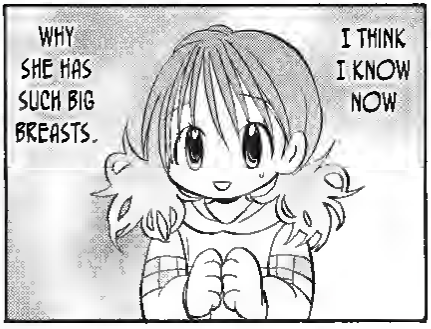

BUT I CAN'T HELP BEING EMBAR-RASSED!
BLUSH
That's just for decora-tion.

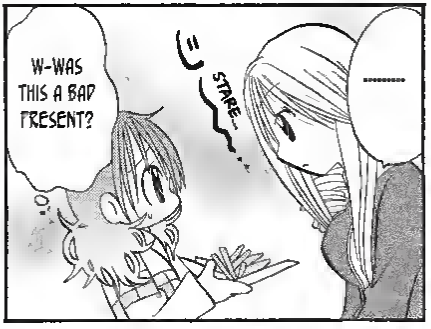

Oh!
CHOMP

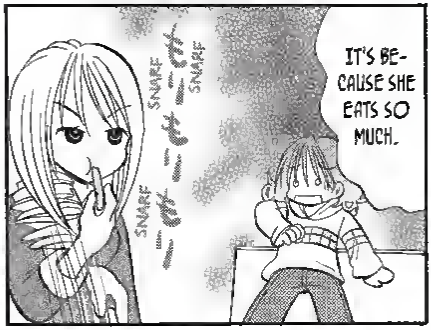

Morning.
Good morning.
THE NEXT DAY...

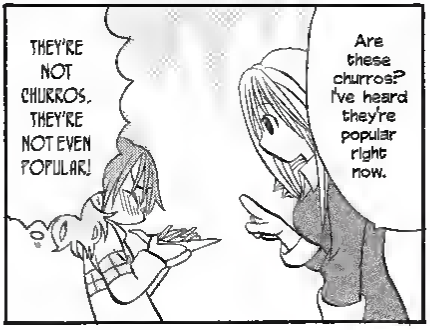
It's good.


Bread crusts.
I... I made these for you as a thank-you for yesterday.

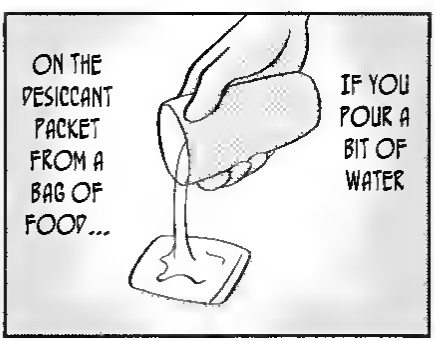

WHY SHE HAS SUCH BIG BREASTS.
I THINK I KNOW NOW

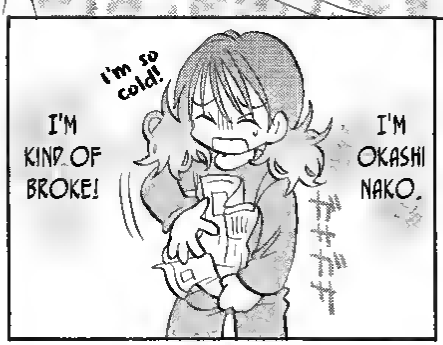

W-WAS THIS A BAD PRESENT?
STARE...
.....

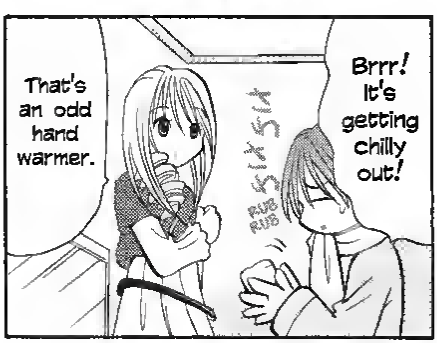

SNARF
SNARF
SNARF
IT'S BE-CAUSE SHE EATS SO MUCH.


THEY'RE NOT CHURROS. THEY'RE NOT EVEN POPULAR!
Are these churros? I've heard they're popular right now.

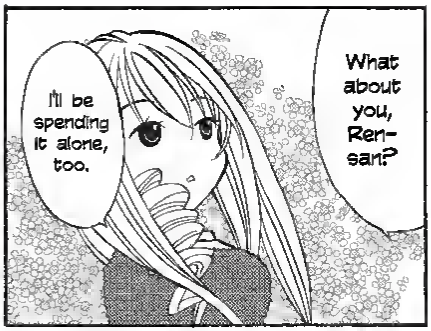
ファファ 4
poor poor

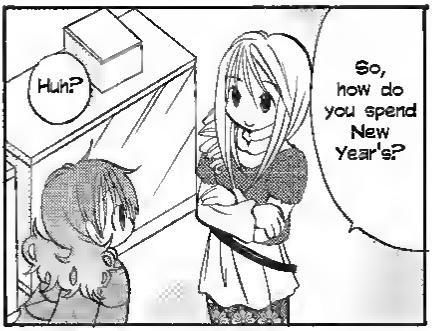


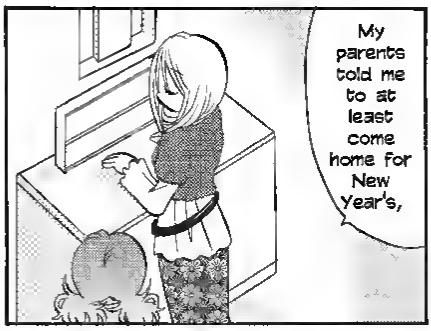


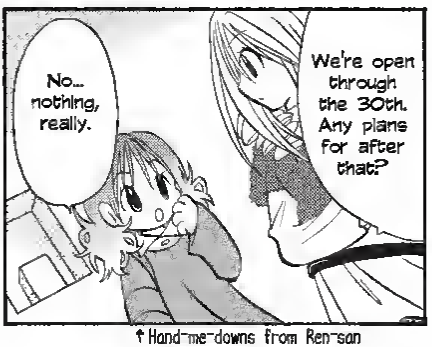


Kids, don't try this at home. ♡

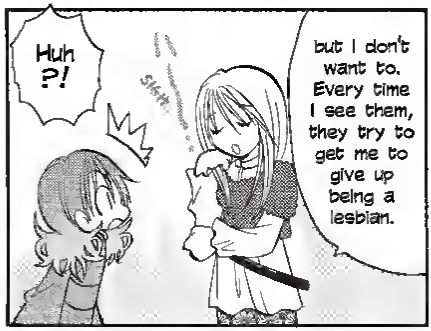


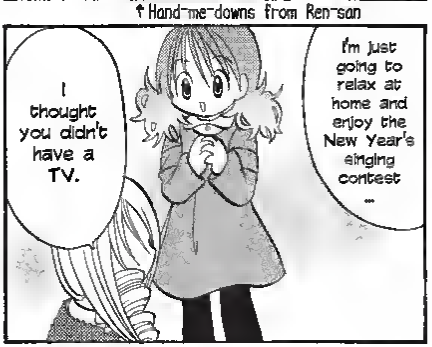


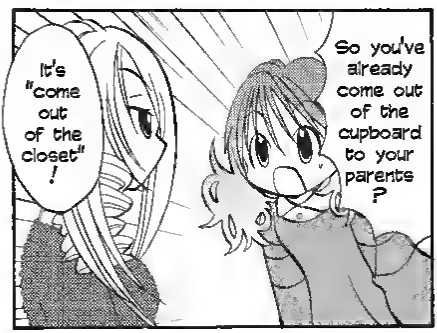


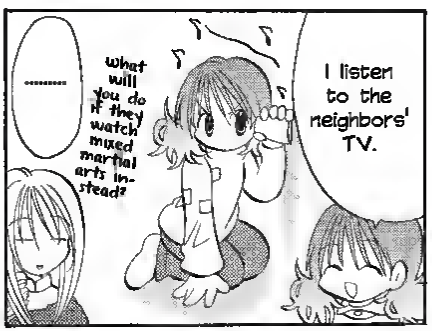


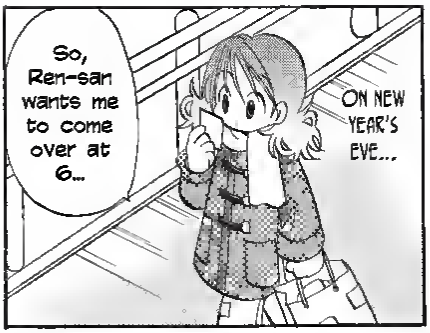
† Hand-me-downs from Ren-san

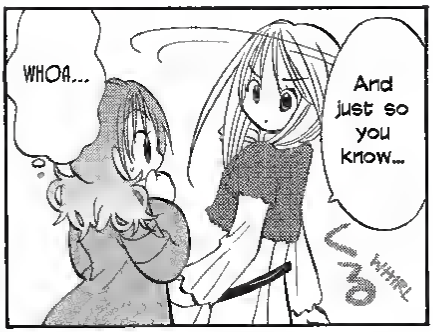


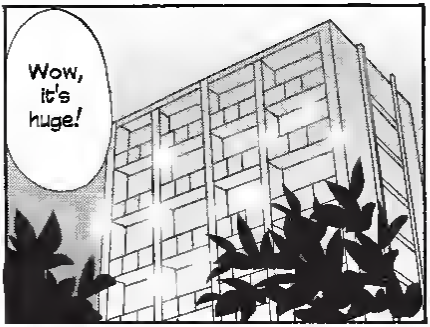


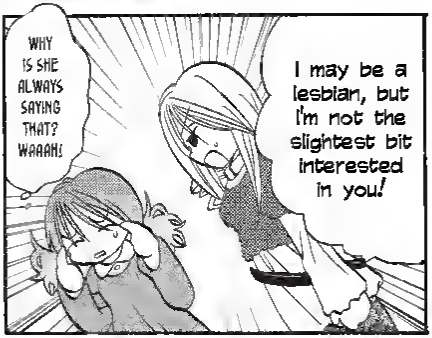


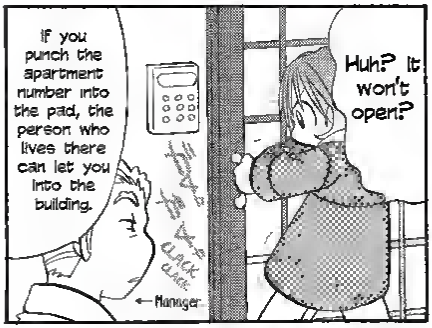



So, Ren-san wants me to come over at 6...
ON NEW YEAR'S EVE...

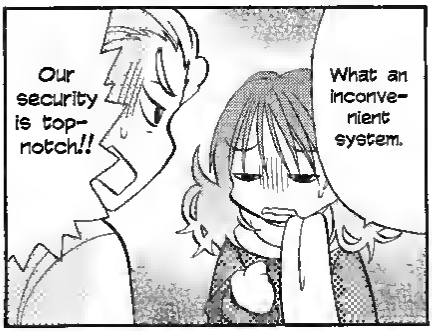

WHOA...
And just so you know...
WHIRL

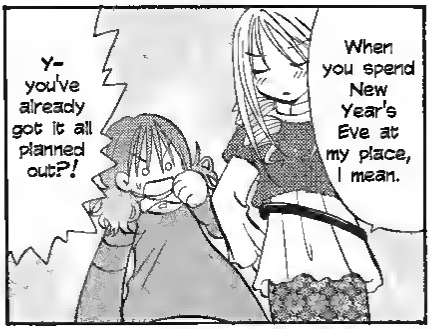

Wow, it's huge!

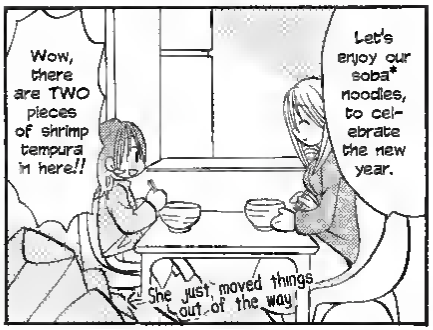

WHY IS SHE ALWAYS SAYING THAT? WAAAH!
I may be a lesbian, but I'm not the slightest bit interested in you!

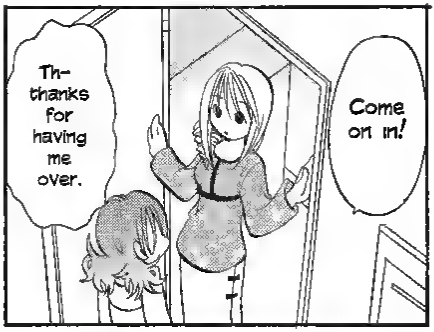

If you punch the apartment number into the pad, the person who lives there can let you into the building.
Huh? It won't open?
← Manager

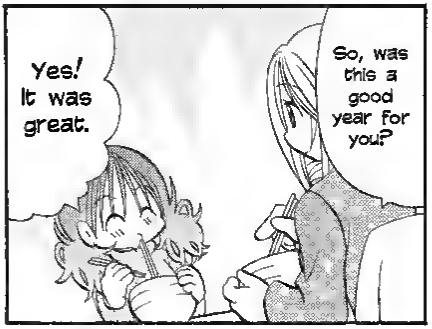
Huh?
So you can relax, okay?

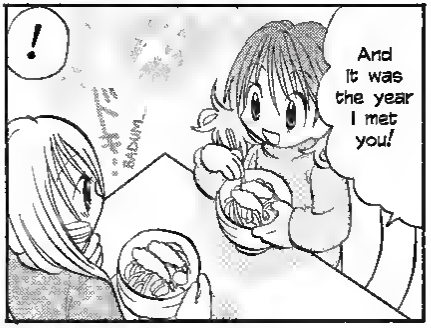

Our security is top-notch!!
What an inconvenient system.

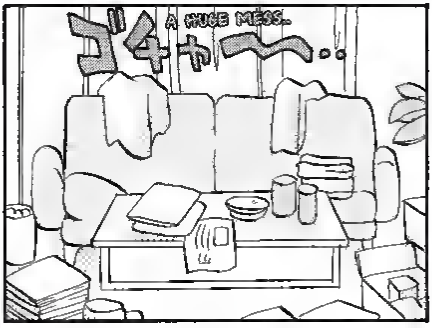

Y-you've already got it all planned out?!
When you spend New Year's Eve at my place, I mean.

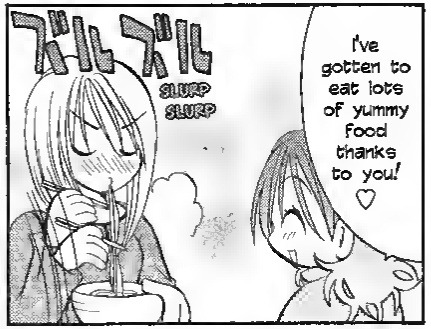

Wow, there are TWO pieces of shrimp tempura in here!!
Let's enjoy our soba* noodles, to celebrate the new year.
She just moved things out of the way!

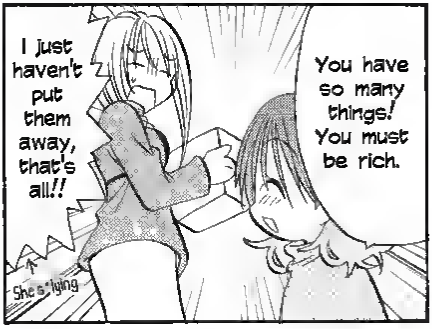




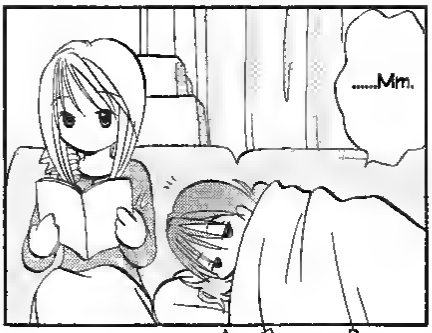






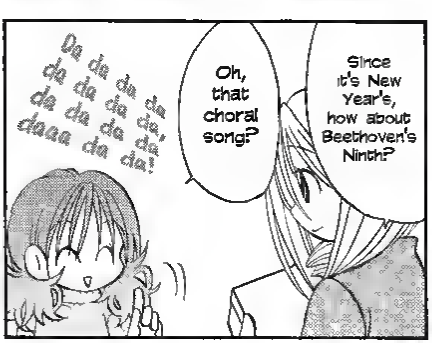


* "Soba" are long buckwheat noodles. They are traditionally eaten on New Year's as a symbol of longevity


.....Mm.

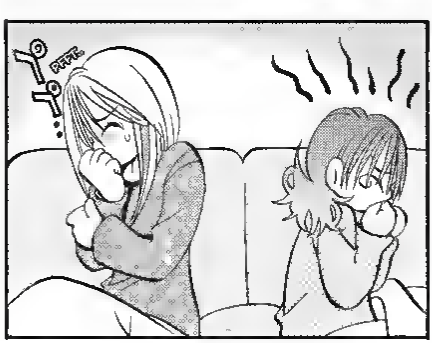
Would you like to listen to some music?
Sure!

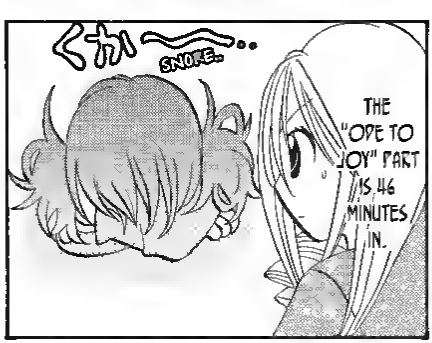
I-IT'S THE NEW YEAR!!
GASP!

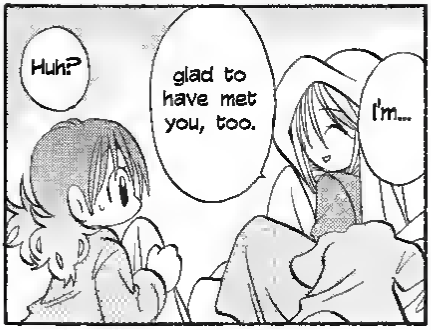

Since it's New Year's, how about Beethoven's Ninth?
Oh, that choral song?
Da da da da da da da da da da da da da da da daaa da da!

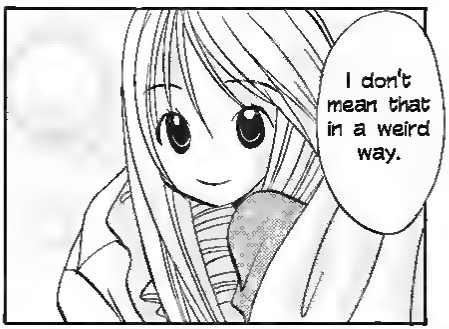
H-Habby New Yuh...
MUMBLE
PANT

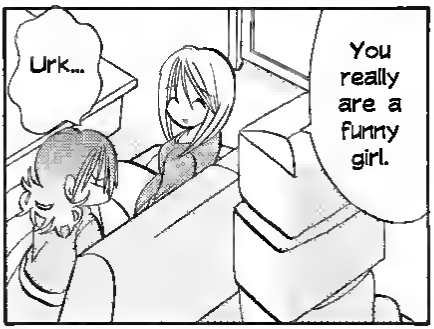
dum! daduuum dadada...
It's kind of dark...
Is that really how it goes?

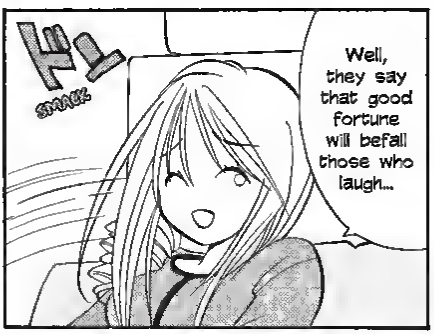

PANT

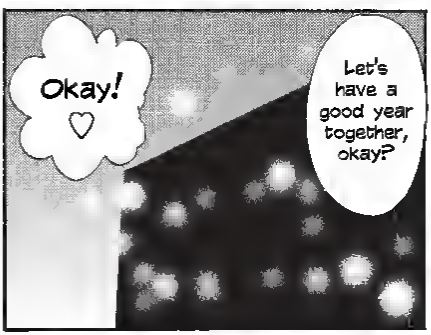

THE "ODE TO JOY" PART IS 46 MINUTES IN.
SNORE...

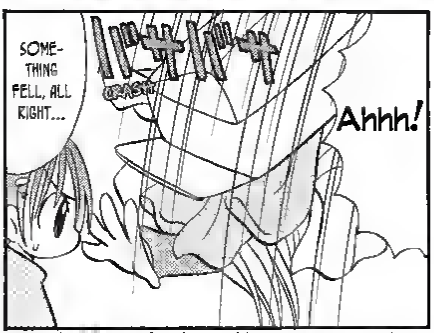






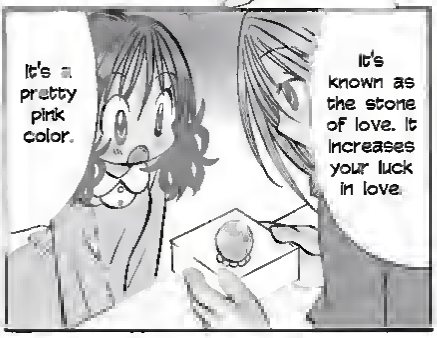






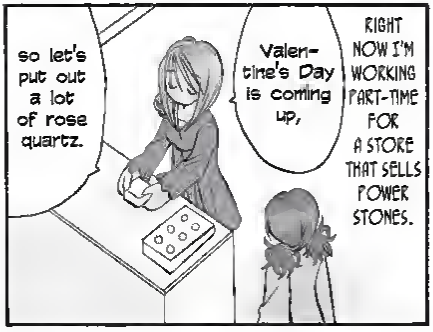
* This is a pun. Good fortune = fuku. Fuku can also mean clothes.
*Fuku is coming" i.e. good luck is coming/clothes are coming (down)

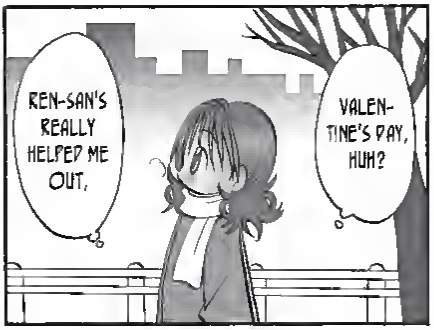
プアプア 5
poor poor

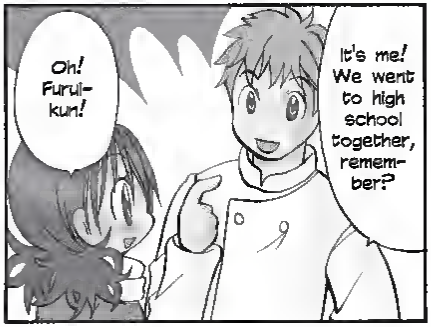

It's a pretty pink color.
It's known as the stone of love. It increases your luck in love.

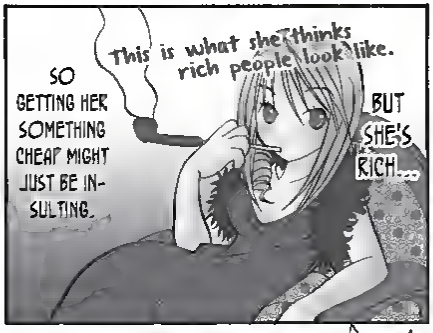
I'M KIND OF BROKE.
I use teabags three times.
I'M OKASHI NAKO.

Don't drool on it!
It looks like a piece of strawberry milk candy ...


so let's put out a lot of rose quartz.
Valentine's Day is coming up,
RIGHT NOW I'M WORKING PART-TIME FOR A STORE THAT SELLS POWER STONES.



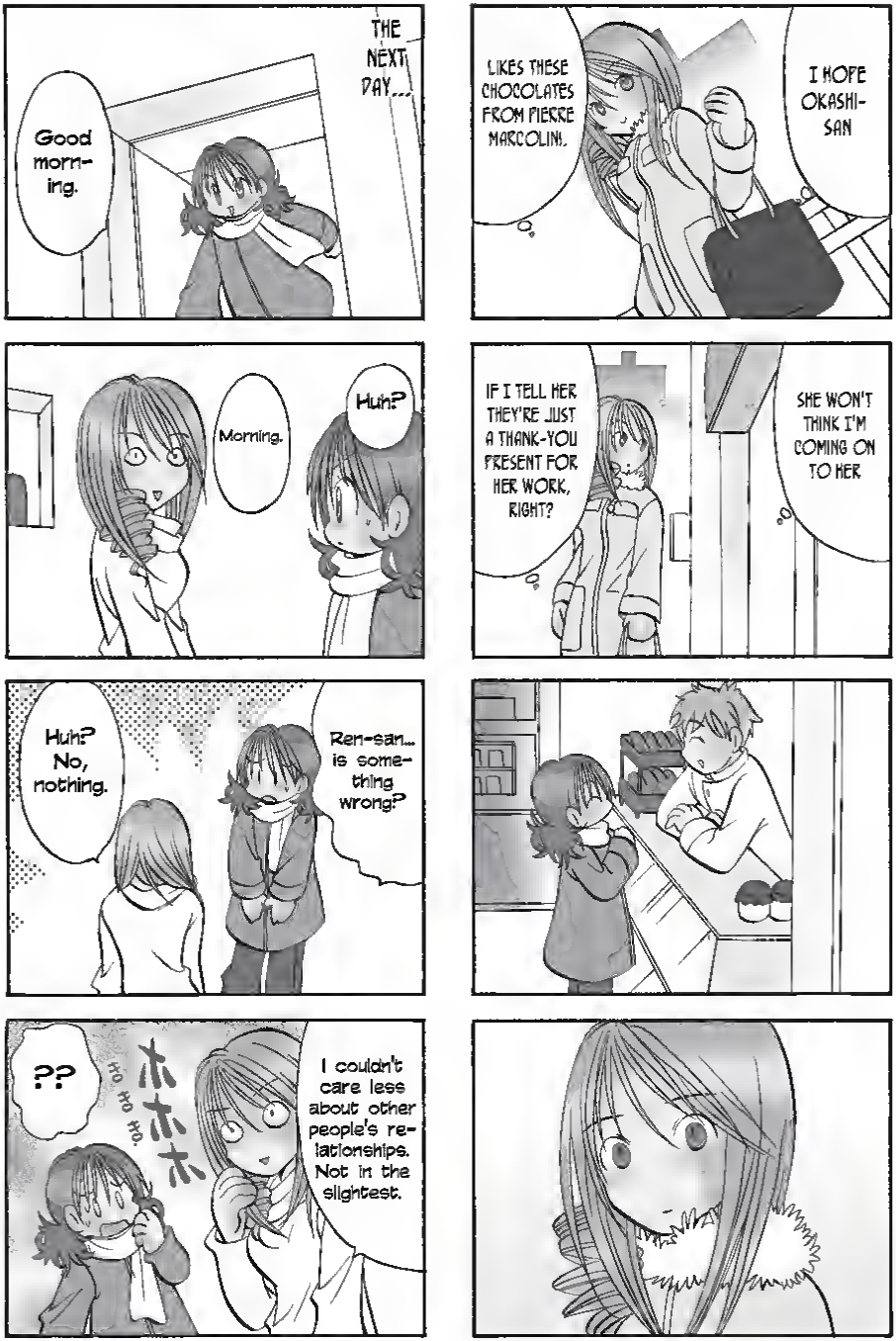




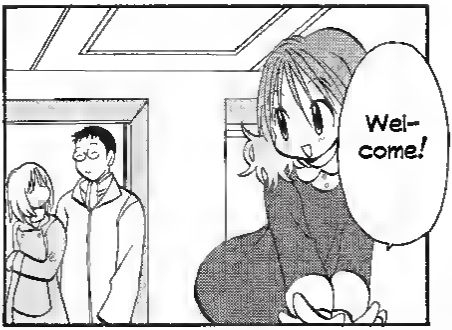
* "Furui" can also mean "old"

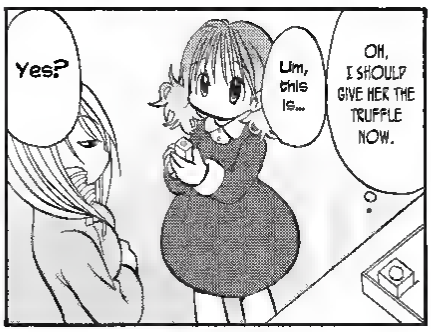
* Both are cheap chocolates, but the Tirol are slightly cheaper

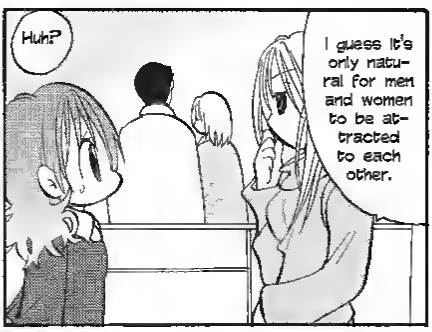
I'm doing better now!
Are you still poor?
Of course.
Oh, that reminds me! Do you sell chocolates, Furui-kun?
an old classmate and all...
Well, since you're
They're two dollars apiece ?!
These are my special truffles!
OR EVEN... GIVE IT TO ME FOR FREE?
OH, IS HE GOING TO THROW IN SOMETHING EXTRA?
BUT... I SHOULD GO FOR IT.
THEY'RE SO EXPENSIVE... AND I'M ALREADY OVER BUDGET...
Th-... thanks...
I'll make you a box for it.
We don't have a box that small !!
I'll take one, please !!

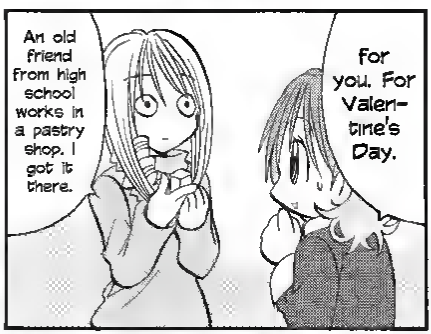

THE NEXT DAY...
Good morning.
I HOPE OKASHI-SAN LIKES THESE CHOCOLATES FROM PIERRE MARCOLINI.
Huh?
Morning.
IF I TELL HER THEY'RE JUST A THANK-YOU PRESENT FOR HER WORK, RIGHT?
SHE WON'T THINK I'M COMING ON TO HER
Huh? No, nothing.
Ren-san... is something wrong?
??
HO HO HO.
I couldn't care less about other people's relationships. Not in the slightest.

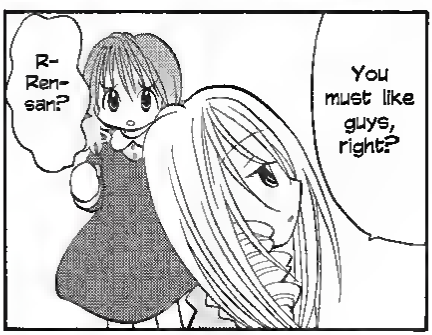
SOME-TIMES I JUST DON'T GET HER.
GEEZ.

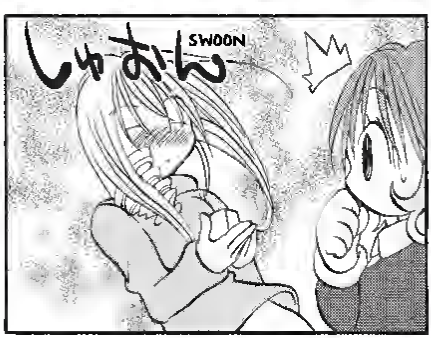

Wel-come!

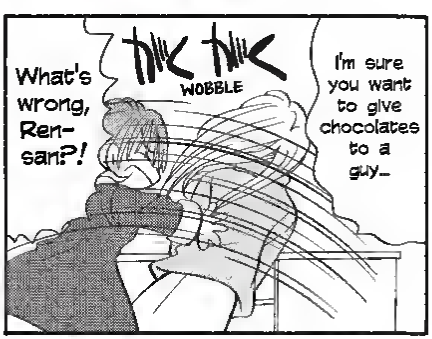

Yes?
Um, this is...
OH, I SHOULD GIVE HER THE TRUFFLE NOW.

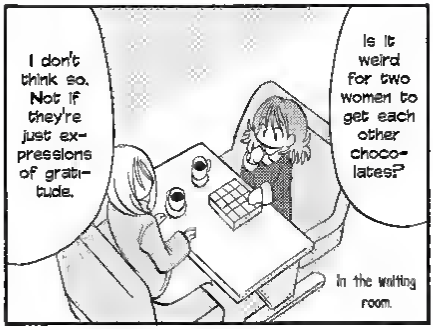

Huh?
I guess it's only natu-ral for men and women to be at-tracted to each other.

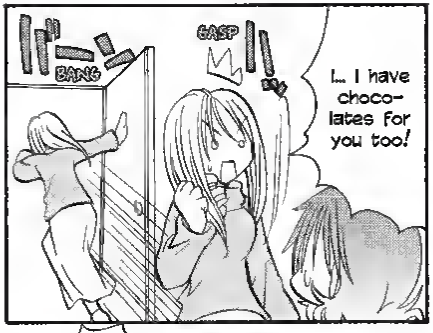

An old friend from high school works in a pastry shop. I got it there.
For you. For Valen-tine's Day.

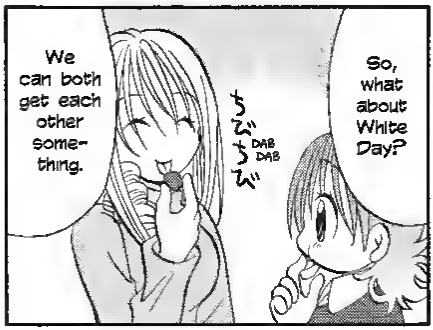

R-Ren-san?
You must like guys, right?

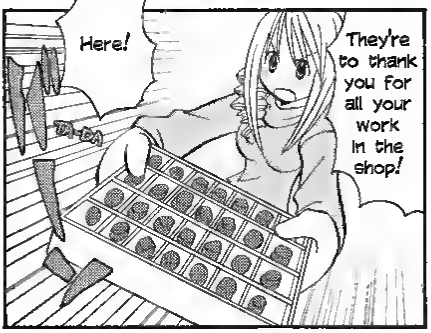

しゅおん
SWOON

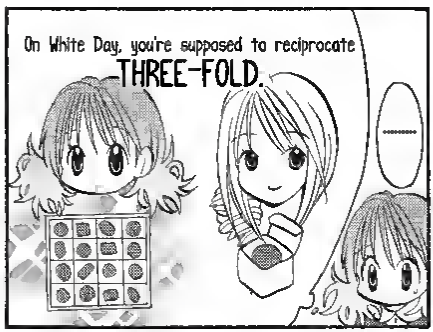

What's wrong, Ren-san?!
かくかく
WOBBLE
I'm sure you want to give chocolates to a guy-

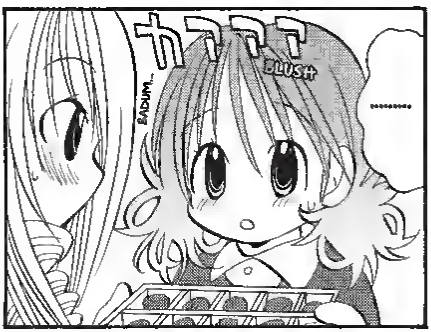

I don't think so. Not if they're just expressions of gratitude.
Is it weird for two women to get each other chocolates?
In the waiting room.

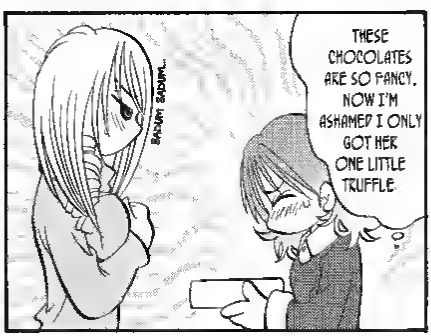






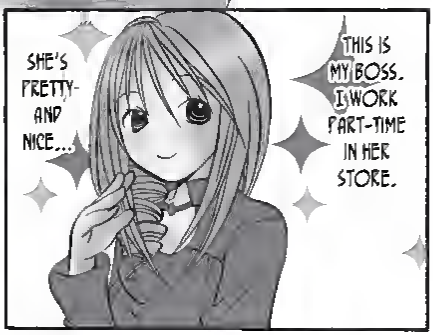


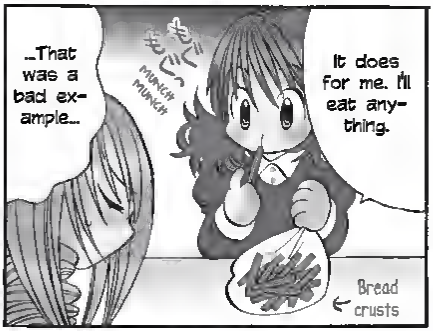


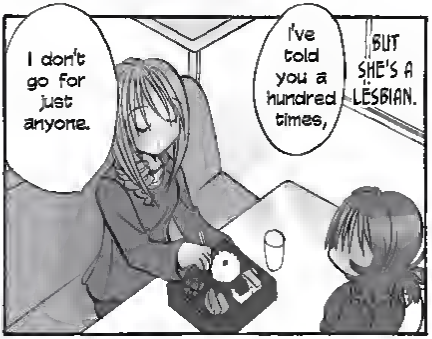


* In Japan women give men chocolate on Valentine s Day
Men reciprocate one month later on White Day

ファプア 6
poor poor



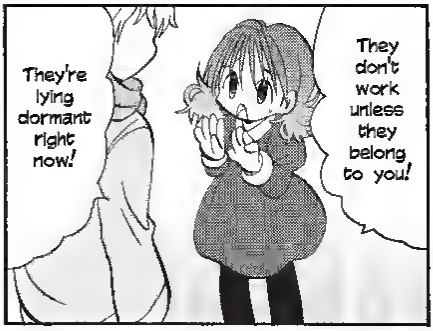




Oh, Ren-san!
Ho ho ho
Wel-come.
Wel-...
Well, I don't know much about power stones, so...
Are you look-ing for a gift for some-one?
Furui-kun!!
Hey.
For example, red coral...
They have a variety of effects.
Oh...
I heard you worked around here.
Wh-why are you putting it on me?!
can be used to repel a pushy man.
I'm not here to collect on a debt !!
Hmm, I owe Oka-san $200... Ren-san $100...
How much do I owe you?

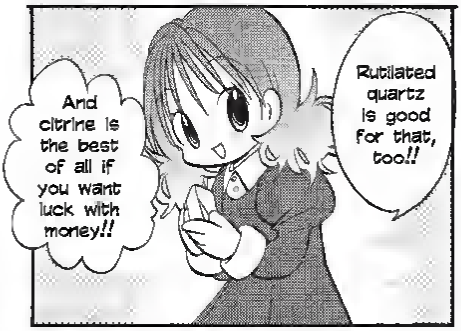
But you're still poor, even though you're around all these power stones.
There's a reason for that!!

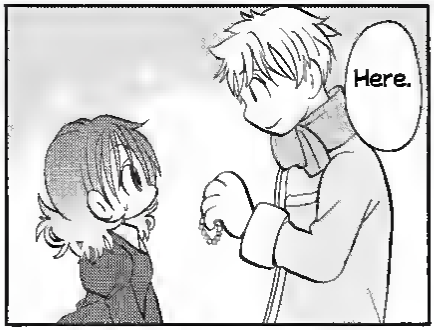
Have you learned what our stones can do, Okashi-san?
You bet!!

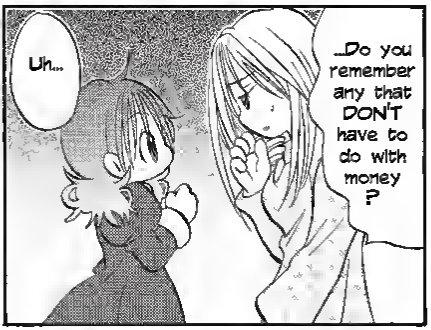

They don't work unless they belong to you!
They're lying dormant right now!

Tiger's eye
will bring you luck with money!

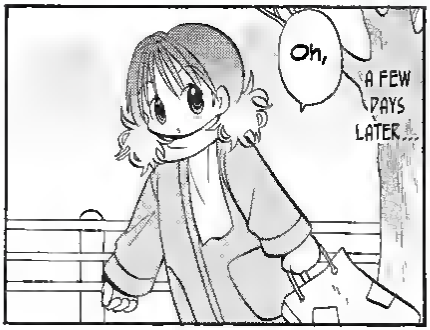
Hunh.
Okay, I'll get this citrine phonestrap.
Thank you!


Rutilated quartz is good for that, too!!
And citrine is the best of all if you want luck with money!!

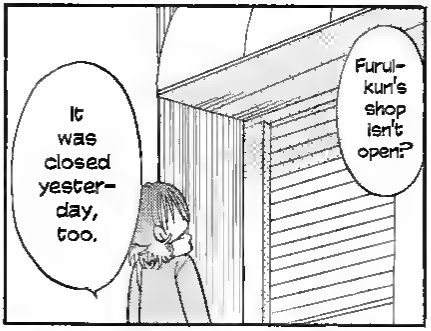

Here.


...Do you remember any that DON'T have to do with money?
Uh...

You keep it, Furui-kun.
Are you kidding me?
It's yours now.
Furui-kun, what...
make your family's pastry shop prosper.
Use it to
to get out of poverty, okay?
Use that boost in luck
CRACKLE
PERK
I can't accept this.
R-Ren-san!!
That one won't do any good.
You know, these stones don't have much effect unless they're 5 karats or more...
I don't have a cell phone to put it on.

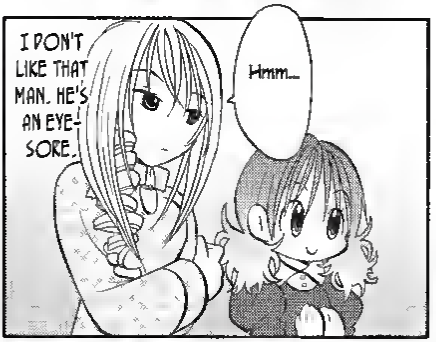

Oh,
A FEW DAYS LATER...

Thank you!
Don't. Really.
Bye! I'll come by again sometime.

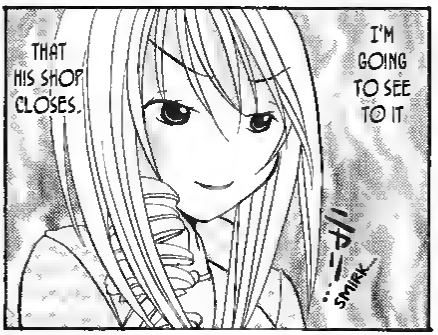

It was closed yesterday, too.
Furui-kun's shop isn't open?

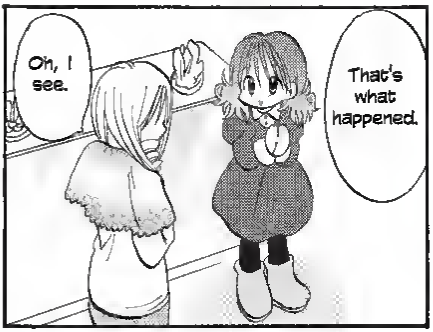
Yes, Furui Cake. It's across the street.
So... his family runs a pastry shop?

Okashi.
Oh, Furui-kun!


I DON'T LIKE THAT MAN. HE'S AN EYE-SORE.
Hmm...

Huh?
That power stone really works !!

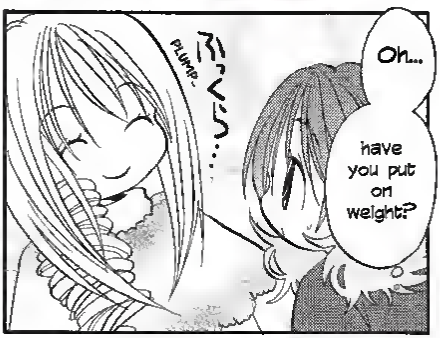

I'M GOING TO SEE TO IT
THAT HIS SHOP CLOSES.
SMIRK

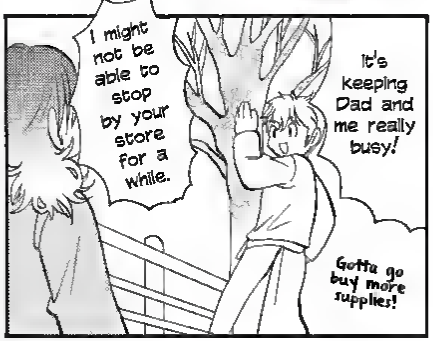

That's what happened.
Oh, I see.

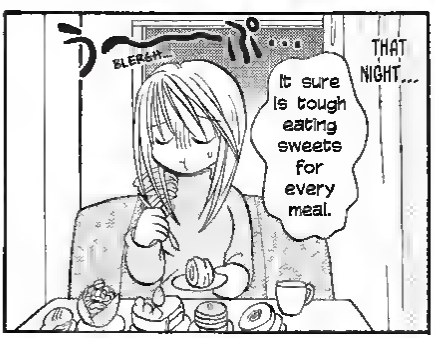
Ever since I bought it, this one customer has been coming first thing every morning, dressed all in black...
カランコロン...
CLACK CLACK

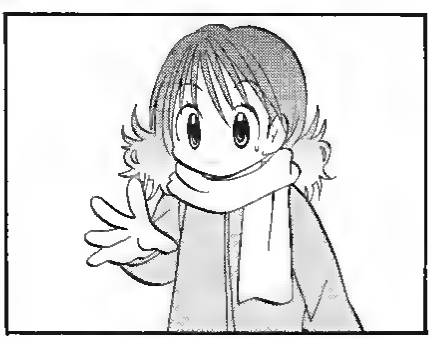
So power stones really do work!

So we end up closing the shop right after we've opened for the day.
I'll take every-thing you have.

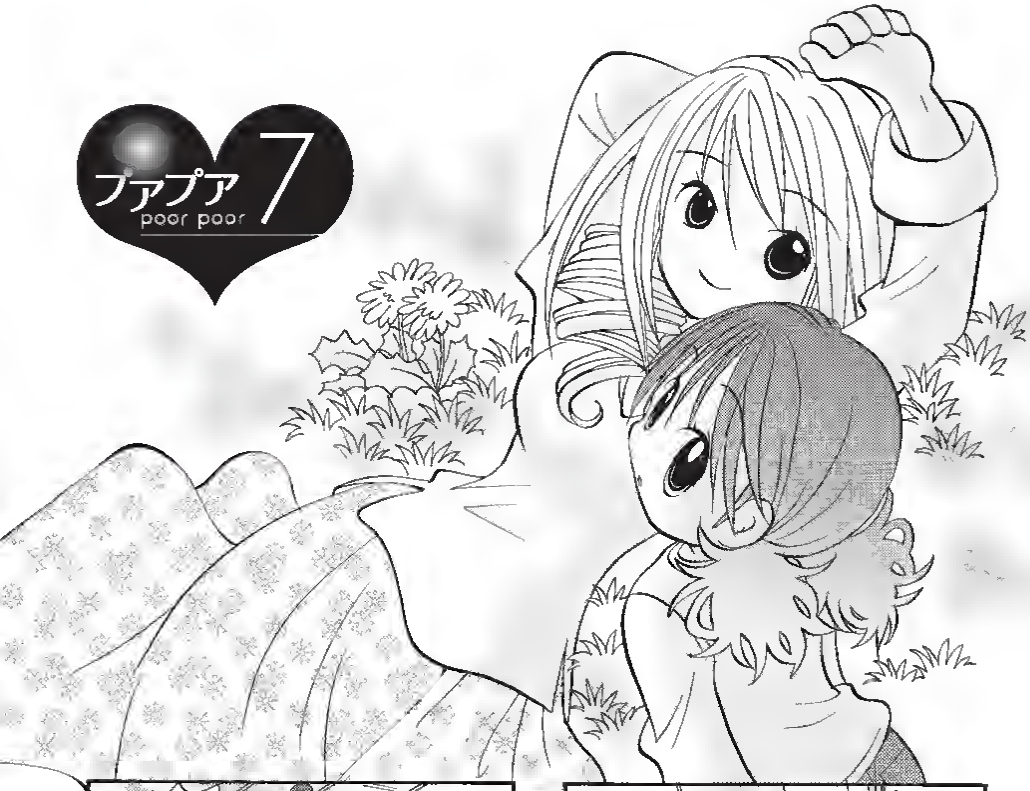

Oh...
have you put on weight?
ぷにぷに...
PLUMP-

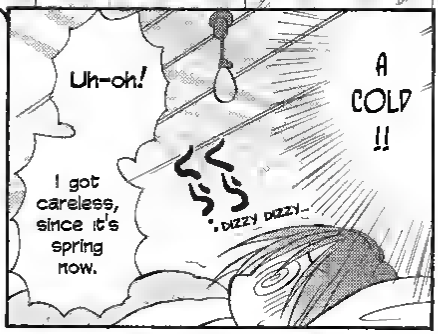

I might not be able to stop by your store for a while.
It's keeping Dad and me really busy!
Gotta go buy more supplies!

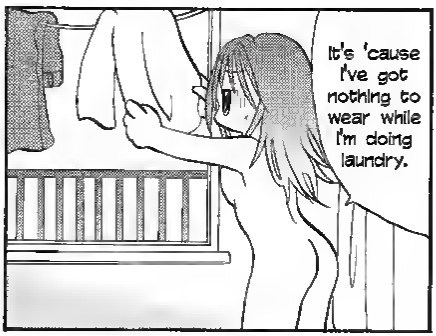

THAT NIGHT...
It sure is tough eating sweets for every meal.
BLEGH...

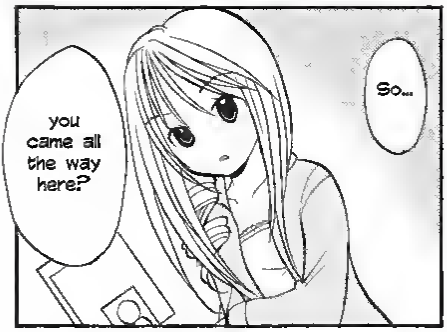


プアプア 7
poor poor

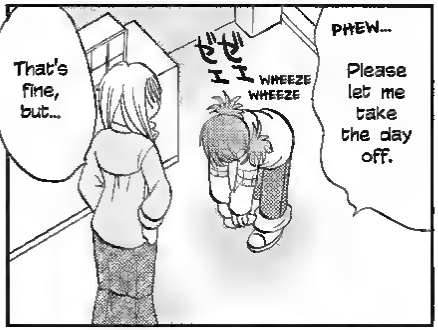


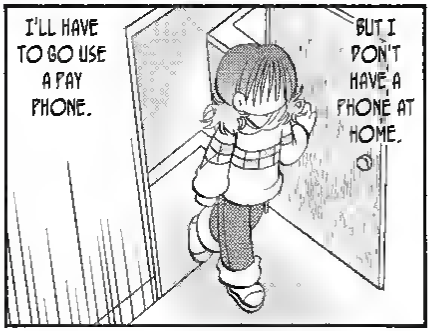


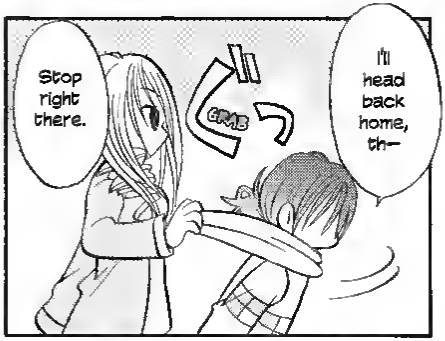


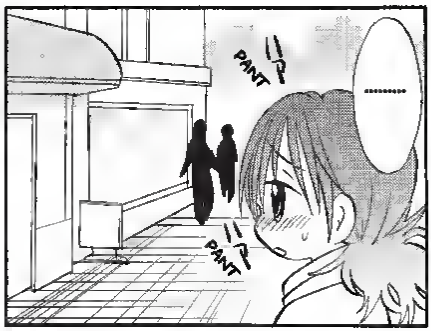

So...
you came all the way here?

I'D BETTER TELL REN-SAN I CAN'T COME IN TODAY.
SNIFFLE
COUGH
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
COUGH

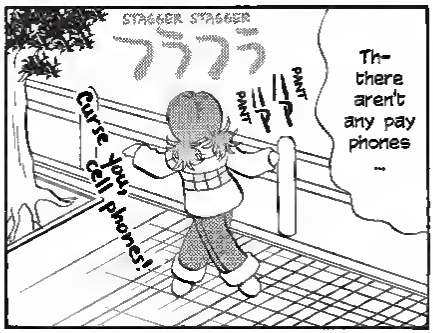

That's fine, but...
WHEEZE WHEEZE
PHEW...
Please let me take the day off.

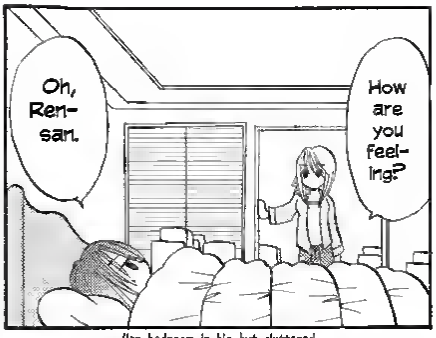

I'LL HAVE TO GO USE A PAY PHONE.
BUT I DON'T HAVE A PHONE AT HOME.


Stop right there.
GRAB
I'll head back home, th-

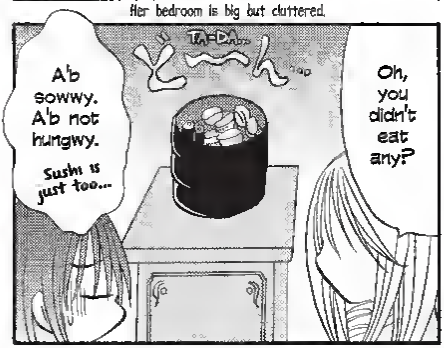

PANT
PANT
.....

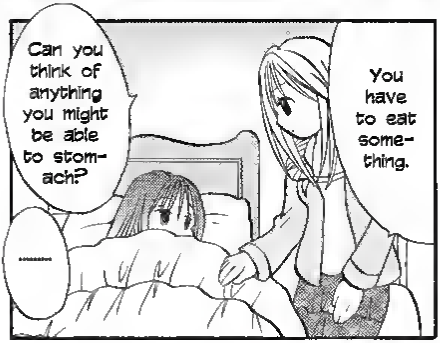
What ?!
I'm going to call a taxi to take us to my place. You can rest and recover there.

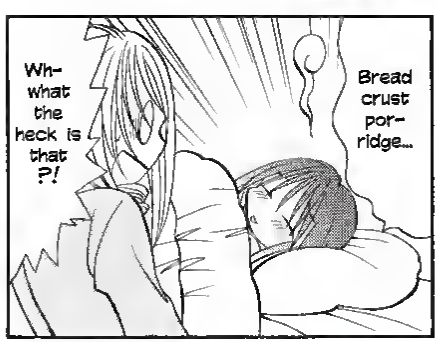

STAGGER STAGGER
PANT
PANT
Curse you, cell phones!
Th- there aren't any pay phones ...

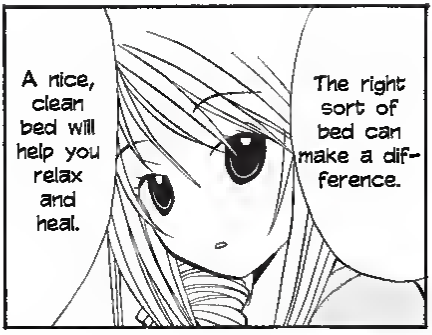


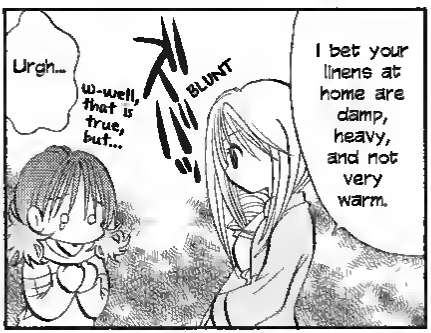
Her bedroom is big but cluttered.

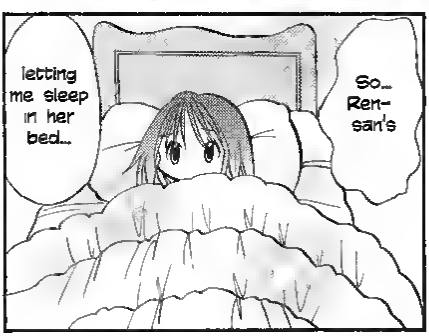


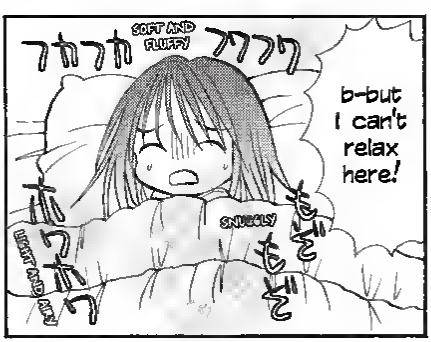


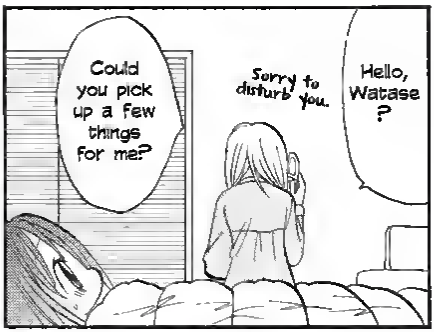


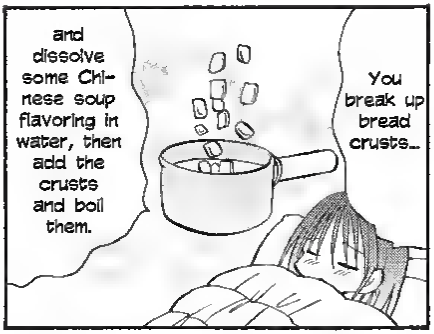


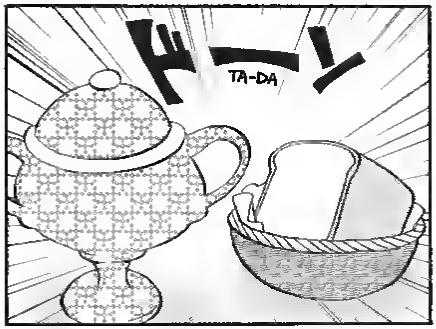


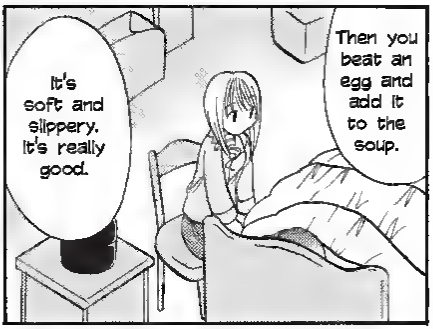




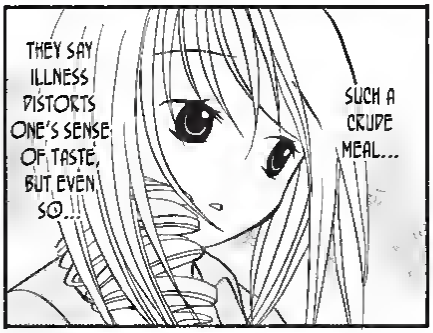




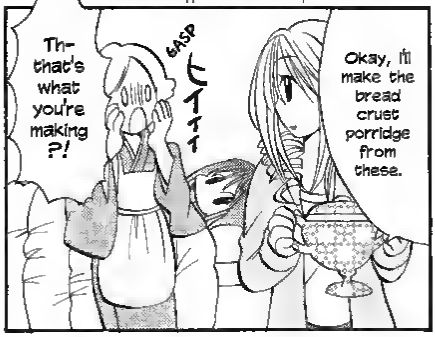




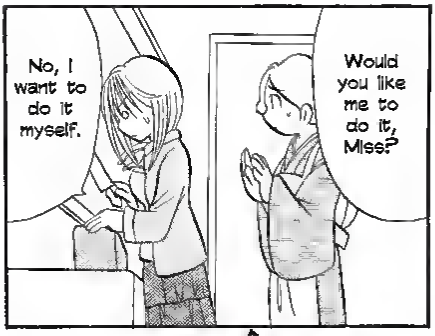
and English bread from the Fujiya Hotel's bakery.
Here you are. Shark fin soup from Shanghai Shuka, a top-notch Chinese restaurant,

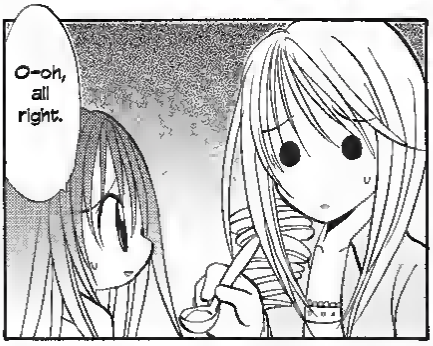


Her first appearance since chapter 1.



I-I can feed myself.
Okay, say "ah."

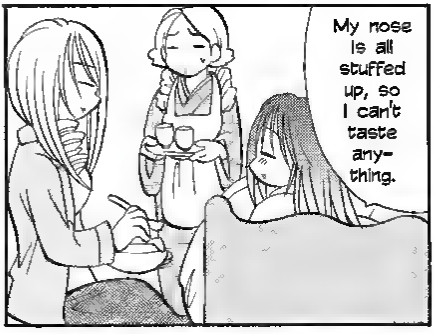

No, I want to do it myself.
Would you like me to do it, Mise?

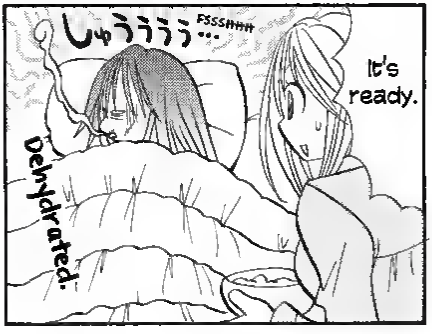

O-oh, all right.

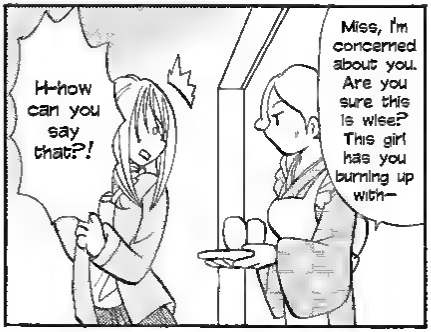
SPURT
THUNK

Only a select few get to taste this sort of delicacy.
What do you think? Is it the best thing you've ever tasted?

BADUM BADUM
.....
Oh, no!
SWEAT
SWEAT
CLATTER
CRASH

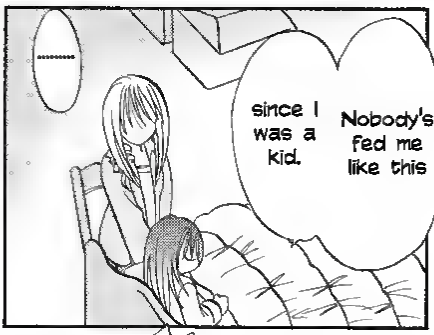

My nose is all stuffed up, so I can't taste anything.

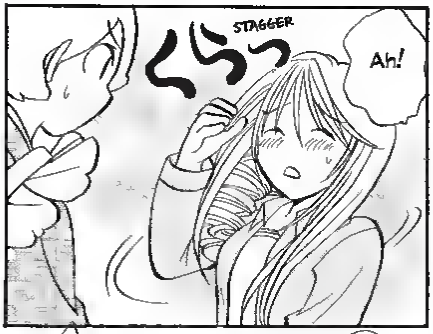

FSSSHHH...
It's ready.
Dehydrated.

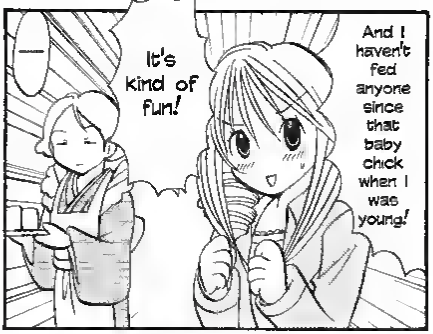

H-how can you say that?!
Miss, I'm concerned about you. Are you sure this is wise? This girl has you burning up with—

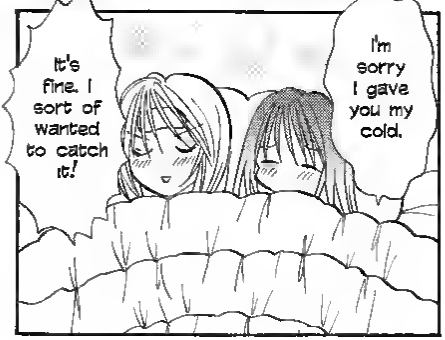
it does feel good.
But...

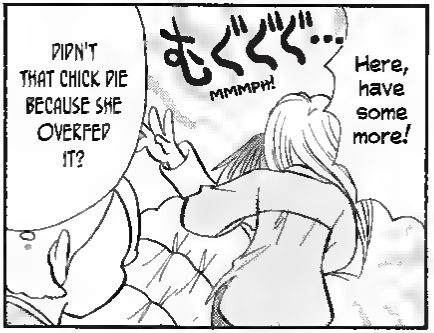
And I've already decided not to fall in l-...
It's only natural to help someone in need, isn't it ?!
BLUSH


.....
since I was a kid.
Nobody's fed me like this

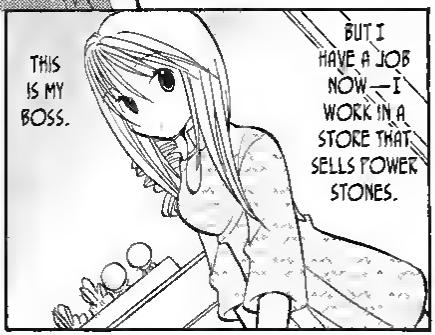

STAGGER
くらっ
Ah!

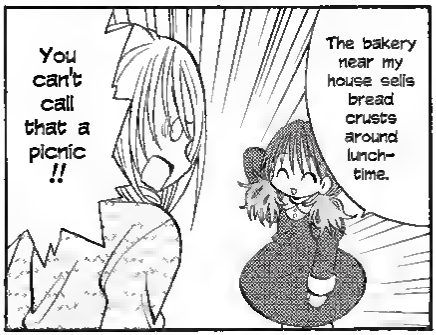

It's kind of fun!
And I haven't fed anyone since that baby chick when I was young!

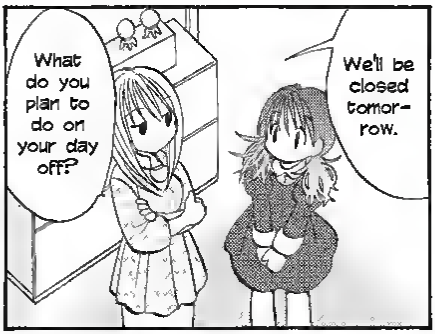

It's fine. I sort of wanted to catch it!
I'm sorry I gave you my cold.

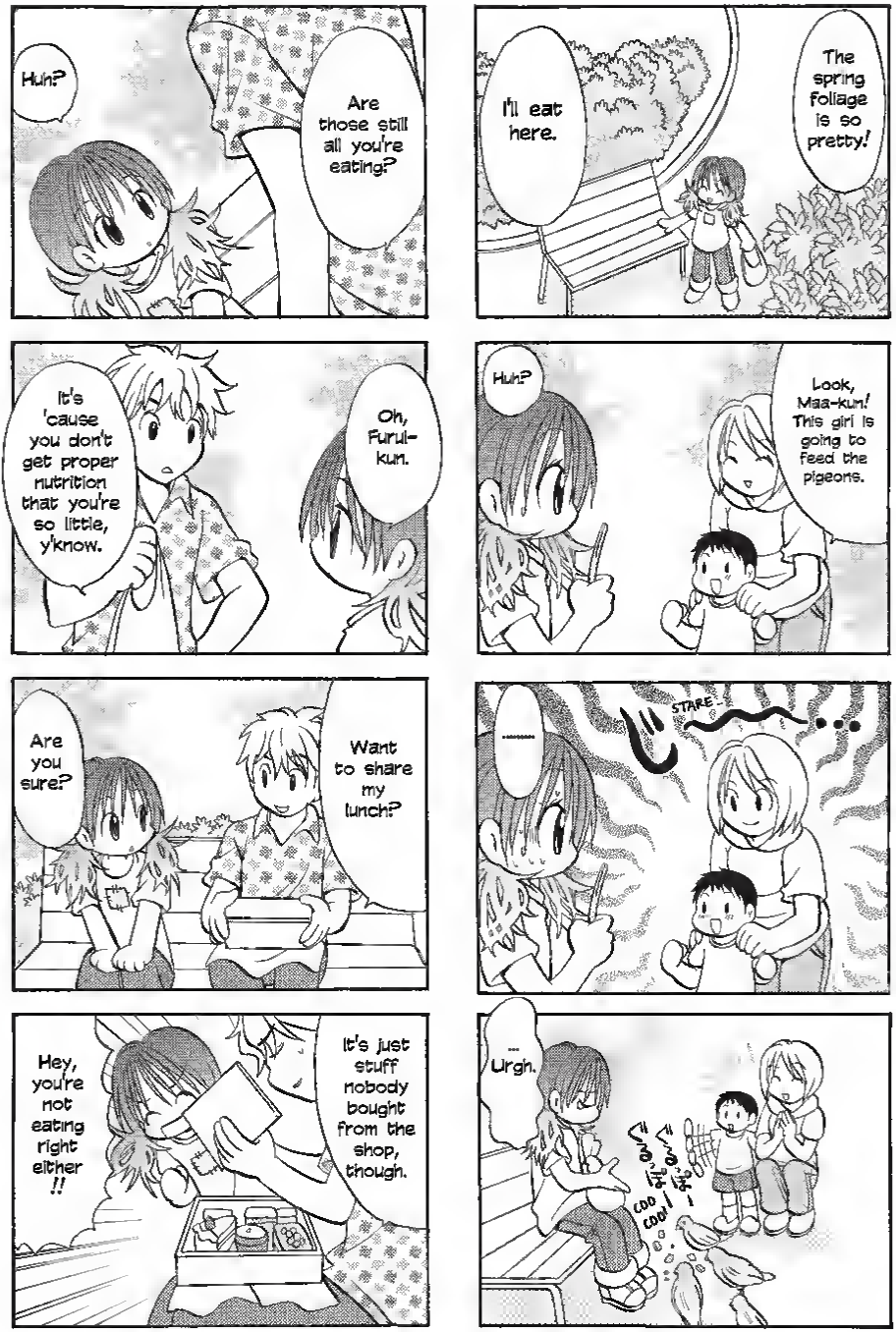

DIDN'T THAT CHICK DIE BECAUSE SHE OVERFED IT?
むぐぐぐ...
MMMPH!
Here, have some more!

プアプア 8
poor poor



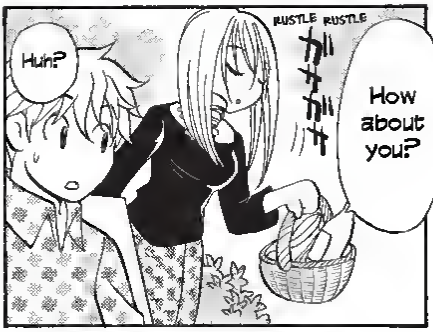


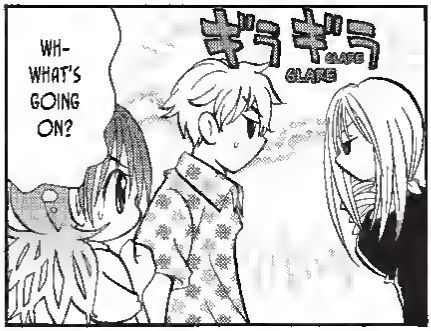



Huh?
Are those still all you're eating?
I'll eat here.
The spring foliage is so pretty!
It's 'cause you don't get proper nutrition that you're so little, y'know.
Oh, Furui-kun.
Huh?
Look, Maa-kun! This girl is going to feed the pigeons.
Are you sure?
Want to share my lunch?
.....
STARE
Hey, you're not eating right either !!
It's just stuff nobody bought from the shop, though.
... Urgh.
COO COO!

Has your boss done anything weird to you?
What?
Hey, Okashi...
MUNCH MUNCH
How can you even ask that?!
Ren-san isn't the sort of person who would get her personal life mixed up in her work!
The word on the street...
is that your boss...
And she says I'm not even her type...
That's right.
is a lesbian. Is that true?
ゴゴゴゴ...
ROAAAR
She's not my type at all.
おどおど
EEP EEP
No! Of course not!!
So she is. I knew it!
You're an open book, you know.

SNIFFLE SNIFFLE
What?!
Well, this is how she looks to me!

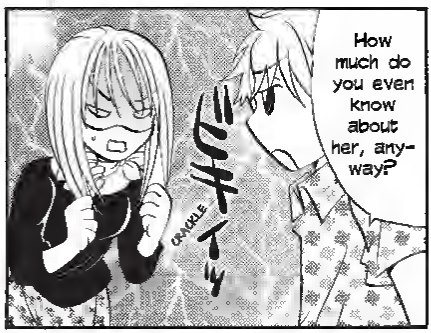

RUSTLE RUSTLE
Huh?
How about you?

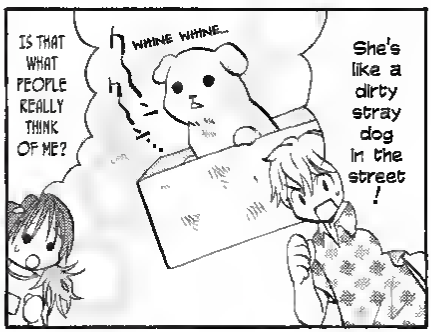

WH-WHAT'S GOING ON?
GLARE GLARE

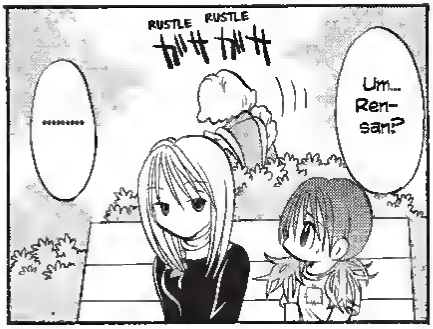
Are you just trying to get in her pants?
You used smooth lines to worm your way into her life.
Ugh, men are pigs.

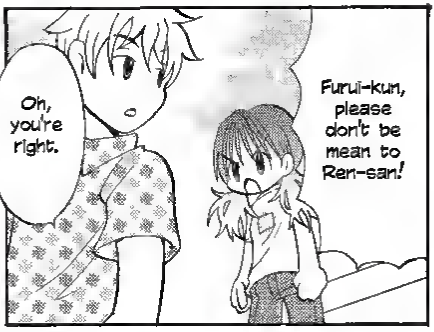
she's had of it over the years.
.....
I know what a hard time

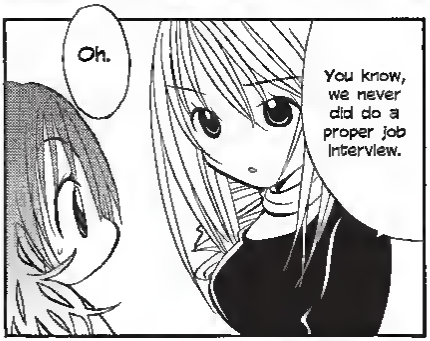
I couldn't just look the other way.
She's an old friend, and she's in trouble!

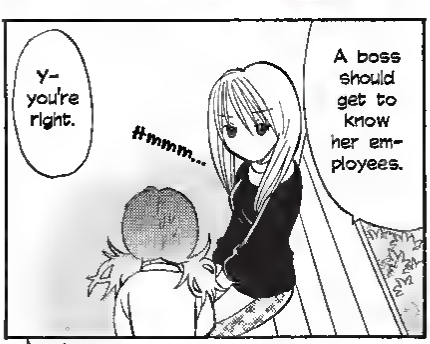

How much do you even know about her, anyway?
CRACKLE

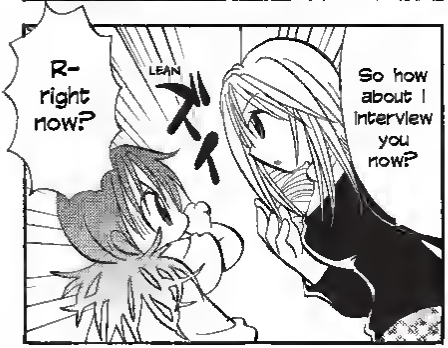

IS THAT WHAT PEOPLE REALLY THINK OF ME?
WHINE WHINE...
She's like a dirty stray dog in the street!

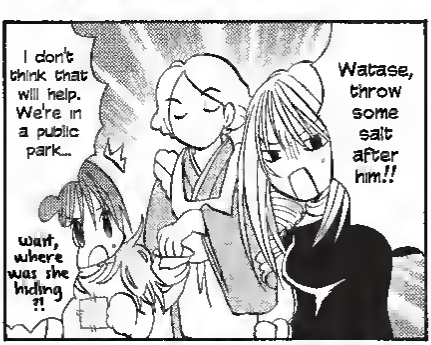




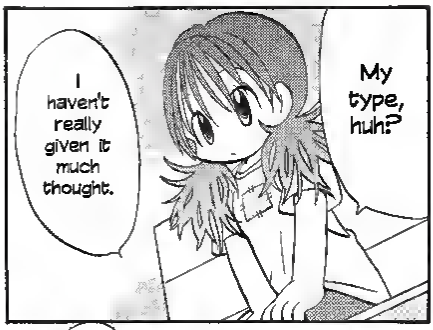


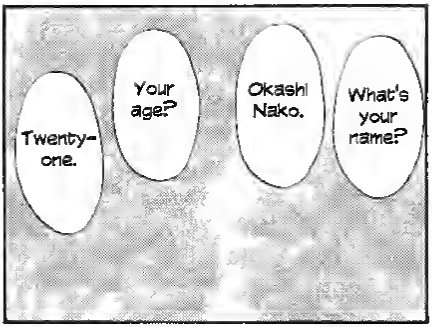


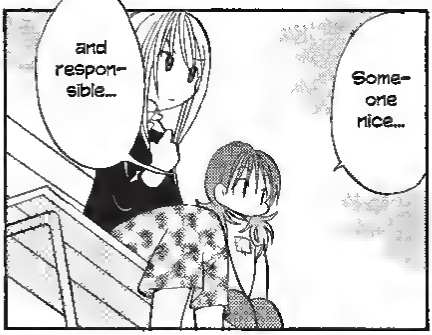


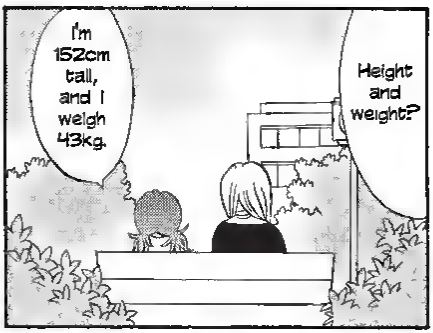


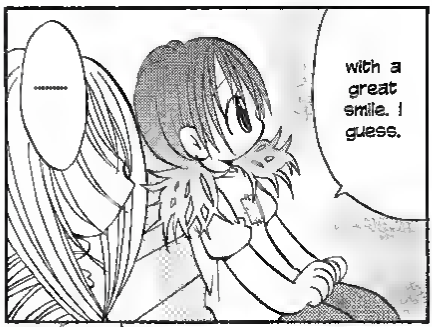
* Salt is seen as a purifying agent that keeps evil spirits and bad luck away
It can also be used to purify one's home after a bad person has visited


My type, huh?
I haven't really given it much thought.

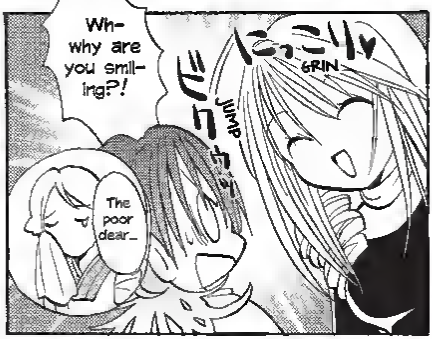

What's your name?
Okashi Nako.
Your age?
Twenty-one.

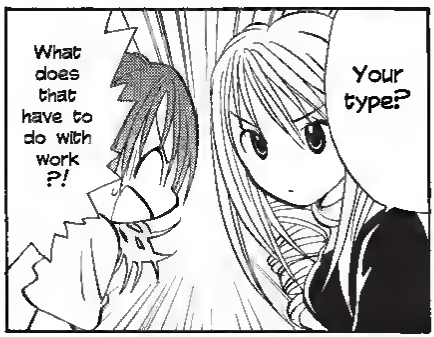

Someone nice...
and responsible...


Height and weight?
I'm 152cm tall, and I weigh 43kg.

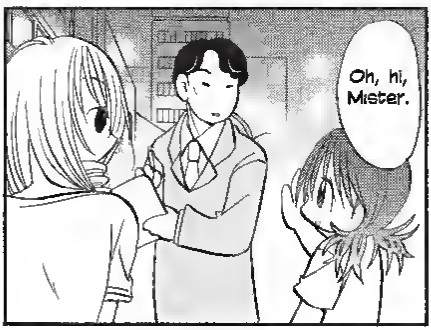

with a great smile. I guess.
.....

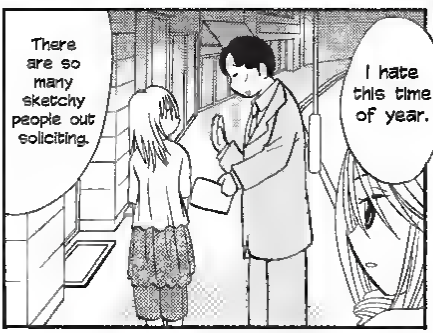
Favorite food?
M-minced meat croquettes, I think?
I don't get to eat them very often, though.

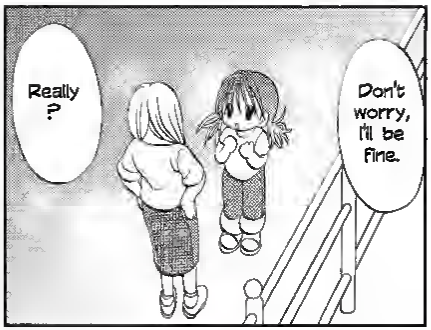

Wh-why are you smiling?!
GRIN
JUMP
The poor dear...

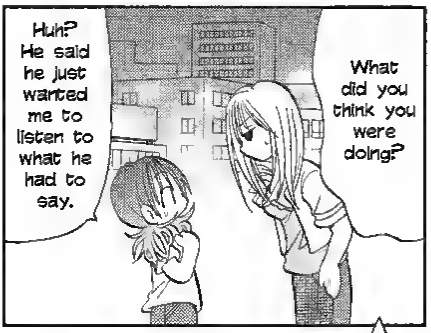

Your type?
What does that have to do with work?!

フアプア 9
poor poor





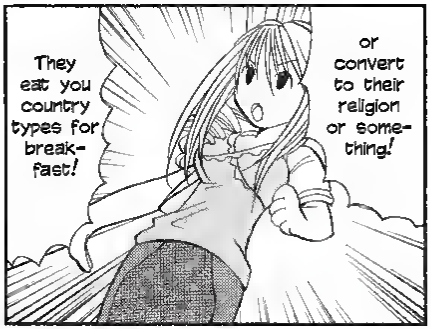

Really?
Don't worry, I'll be fine.

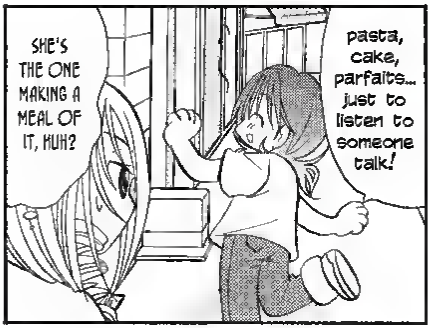

Huh? He said he just wanted me to listen to what he had to say.
What did you think you were doing?

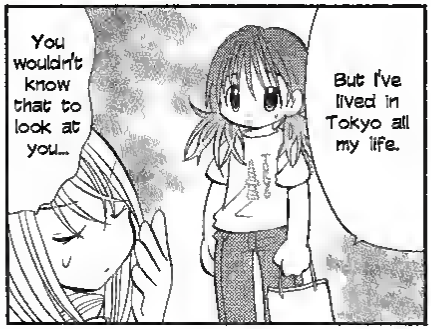
A few little words that send everyone running.
I have a surefire way to scare people off.

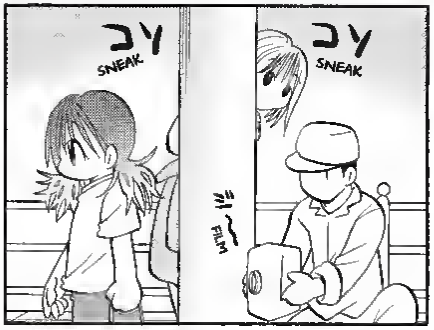
He and his ilk are always trying to get you to buy expensive learning materials
Don't fall for that!

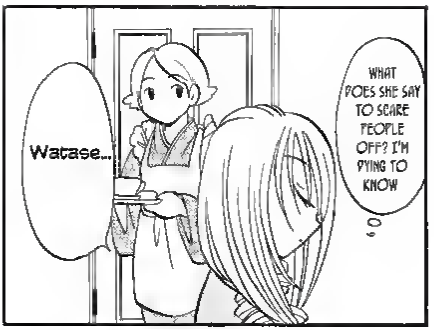
And I get to eat delicious food...
A SUREFIRE WAY?


They eat you country types for breakfast!
or convert to their religion or something!


SHE'S THE ONE MAKING A MEAL OF IT, HUH?
pasta, cake, parfaits... just to listen to someone talk!


You wouldn't know that to look at you...
But I've lived in Tokyo all my life.

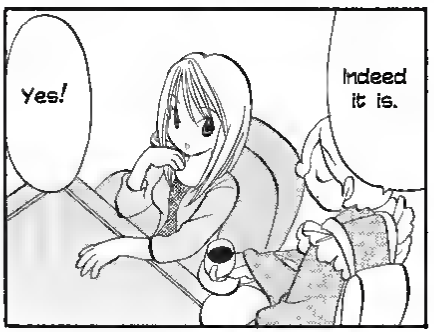

SNEAK
SNEAK
FILM

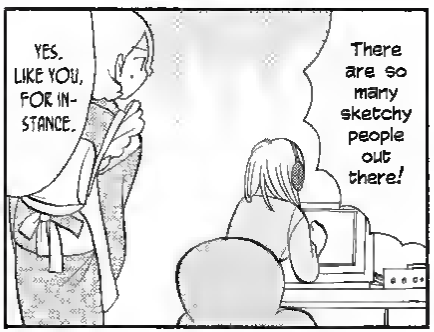

Watase...
WHAT DOES SHE SAY TO SCARE PEOPLE OFF? I'M DYING TO KNOW

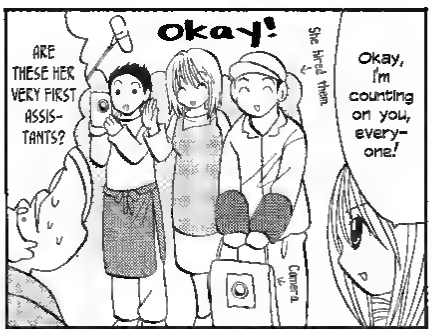
Someone's made contact with her.
Hey, do you have a minute?

all about her employees, right?
It's important for a boss to know

How can she be so careless?!
Already?

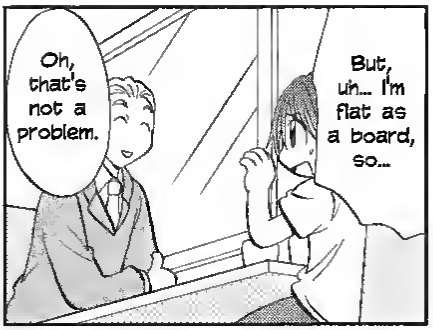

Yes!
Indeed it is.

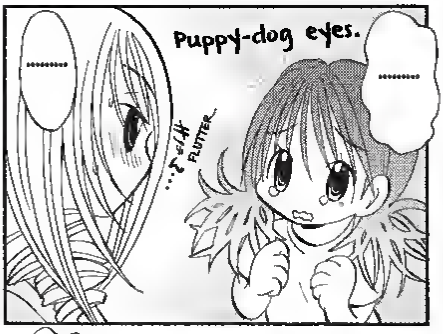

YES. LIKE YOU, FOR INSTANCE.
There are so many sketchy people out there!

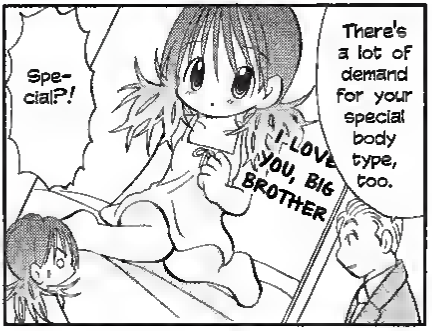

ARE THESE HER VERY FIRST ASSISTANTS?
Okay!
She hired them
Okay, I'm counting on you, everyone!
Camera

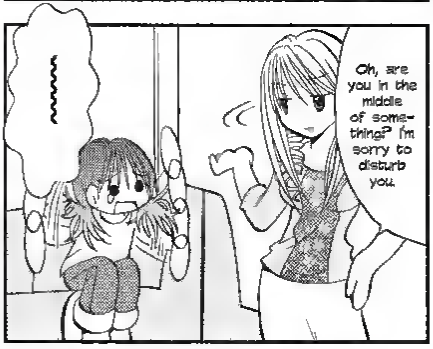
and I doubt I'd be able to take out a loan.
I don't have a credit card, either,
Um,
So you see, our English conversational DVDs are a great bargain.
So I can't buy any.
Don't worry! You can take out a loan.
MUNCH
モグモグ
MUNCH
I can't afford to buy any.
Huh?
SMILE
SMILE
ニコニコ
Oh, I see.
$200,000 in debt.
I'm
Wha—?! Adult videos ?!
The pay is quite good! What do you say?
Well, we also make adult videos.

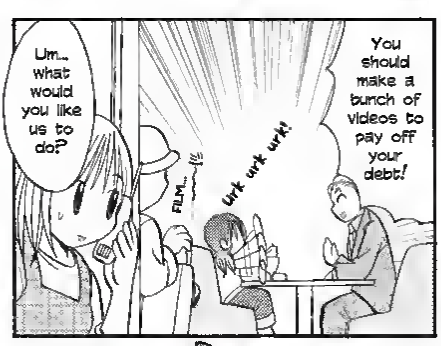
WHEEZE WHEEZE...
ゼェゼェ...
Ren-san!!
What are you up to?
Oh, fancy meeting you here!

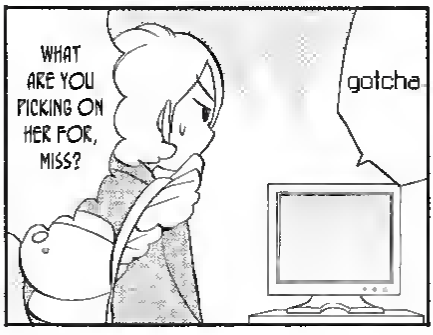

Oh, that's not a problem.
But, uh... I'm flat as a board, so...

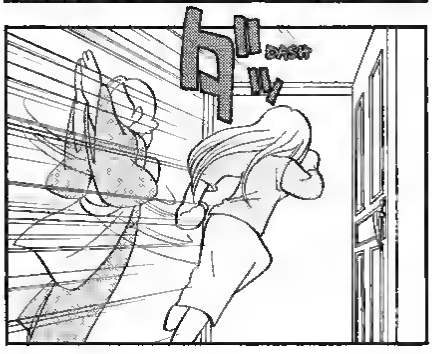

.....
Puppy-dog eyes.
FLUTTER
.....

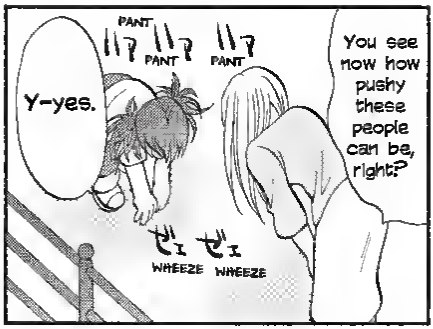

Spe-cial?!
There's a lot of demand for your special body type, too.
I LOVE YOU, BIG BROTHER

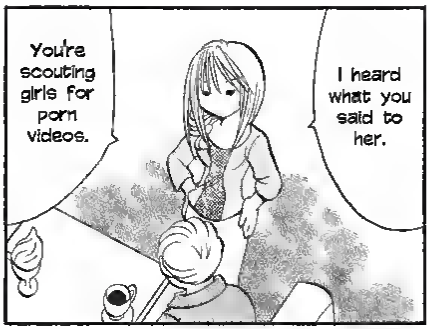

.....
Oh, are you in the middle of some-thing? I'm sorry to disturb you.

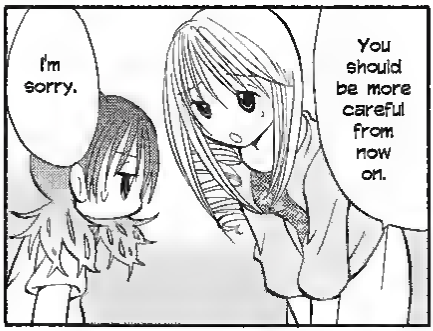

Um... what would you like us to do?
FLM...
urk urk urk!
You should make a bunch of videos to pay off your debt!


WHAT ARE YOU PICKING ON HER FOR, MISS?
gotcha

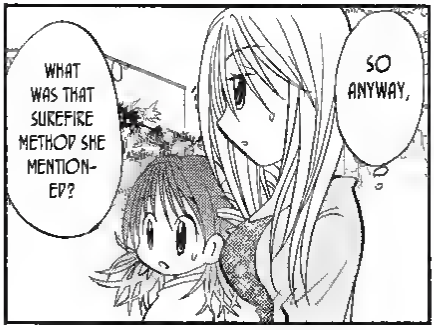

BASH

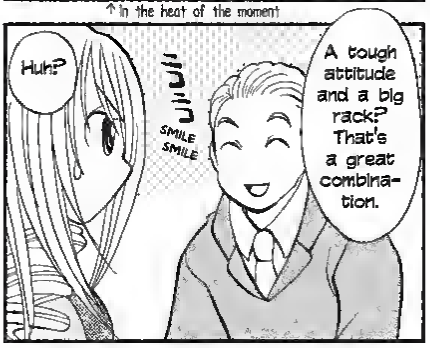


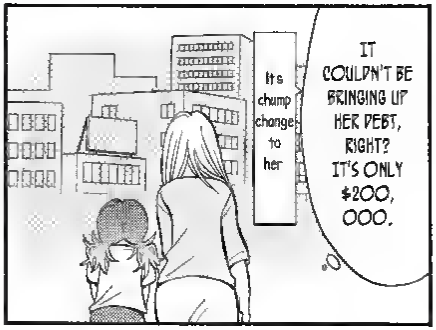


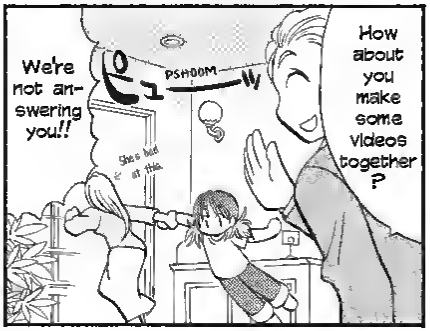


↑ In the heat of the moment

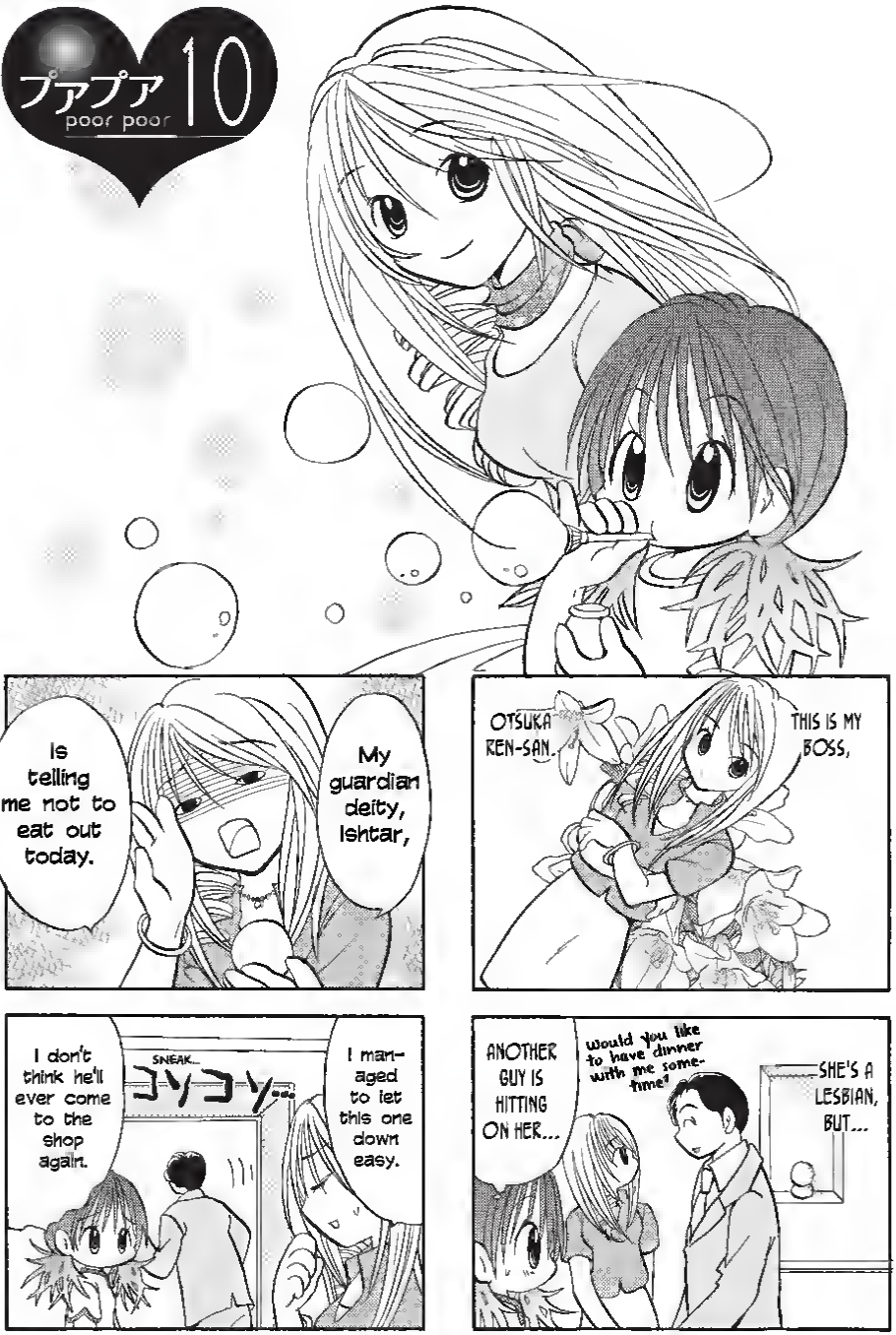


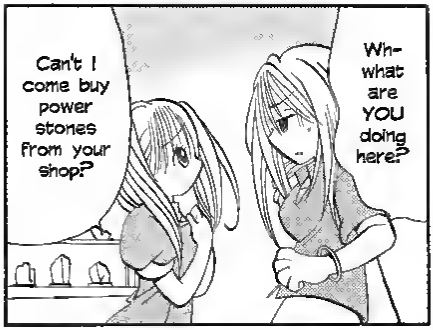






プアプア 10
poor poor

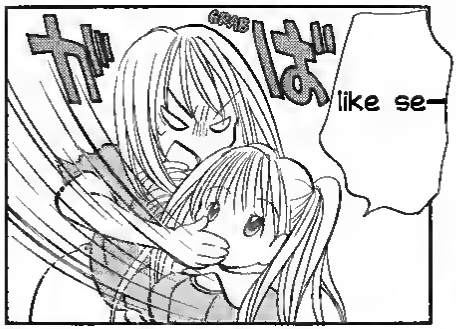

My guardian deity, Ishtar,
is telling me not to eat out today.
THIS IS MY BOSS,
OTSUKA REN-SAN.
I don't think he'll ever come to the shop again.
SNEAK...
コソコソ...
I managed to let this one down easy.
ANOTHER GUY IS HITTING ON HER...
Would you like to have dinner with me sometime?
SHE'S A LESBIAN, BUT...


Can't I come buy power stones from your shop?
Wh-what are YOU doing here?

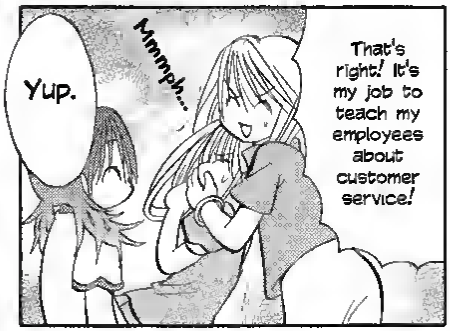
Wel-...

Among other things...
You're the one who taught me about them.

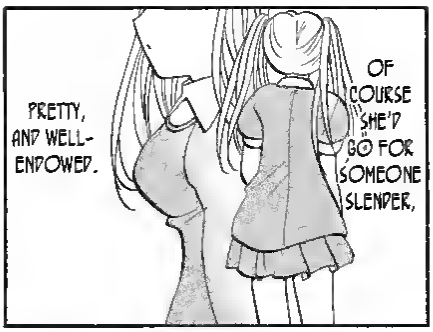
SHE LOOKS LIKE A DOLL.
WOW, SHE'S SO CUTE!

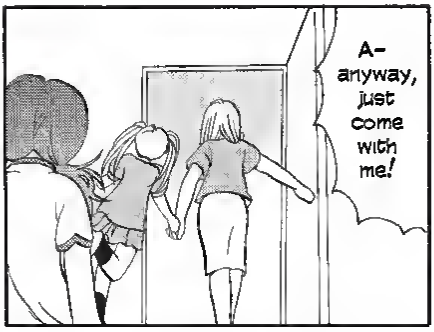

GRAB
like se-

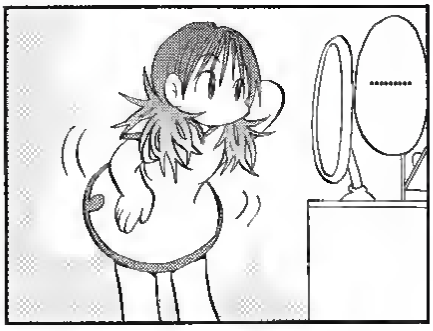
Huh?
Is Ren here?

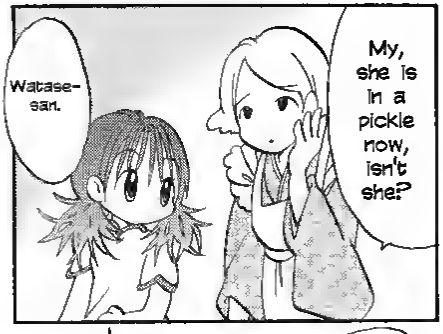

Yup.
Mmmph...
That's right! It's my job to teach my employees about customer service!

Wha...?
Frozen stiff.


PRETTY, AND WELL-ENDOWED.
OF COURSE SHE'D "GO" FOR SOMEONE SLENDER,

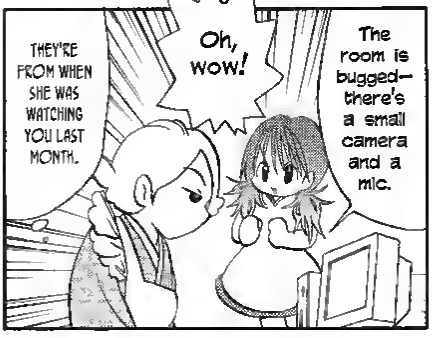

A-anyway, just come with me!

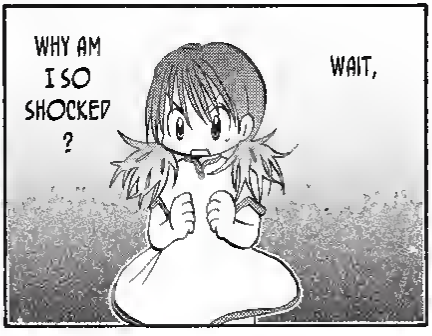

.....


Watase-san.
My, she is in a pickle now, isn't she?

Are you worried about her?
ARGH ARGH!
WHAT AM I DOING ?!

What ?!
GAH!
To have that ex of hers drop in...


THEY'RE FROM WHEN SHE WAS WATCHING YOU LAST MONTH.
Oh, wow!
The room is bugged—there's a small camera and a mic.

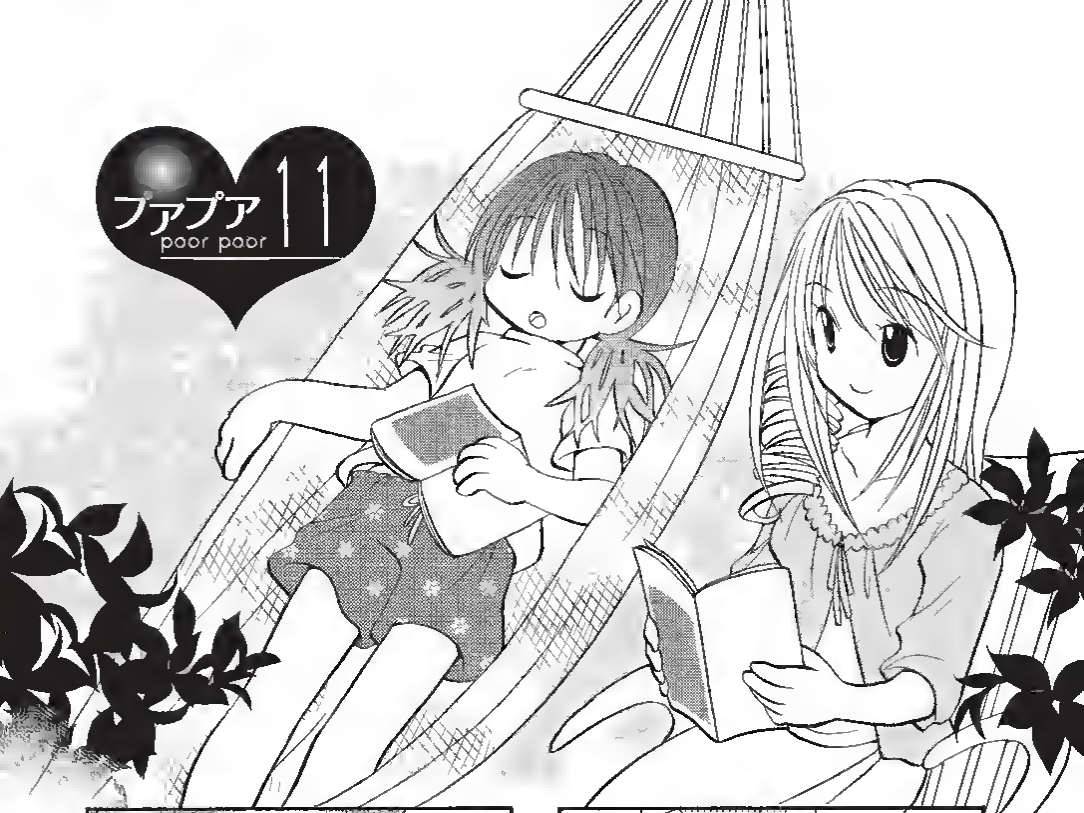

WHY AM I SO SHOCKED ?
WAIT,

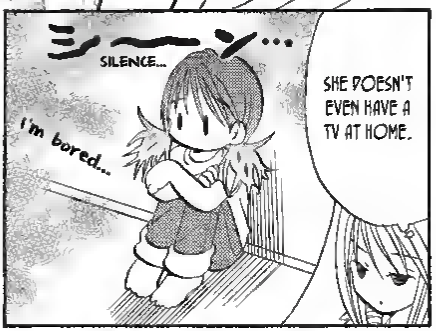
...Really?
I'd do anything for you.
I know I was selfish before...
Re-en,
Huh?
Let me see the data folder on your phone, then.
So can I be with you again? Please...
but I know better know.
Just let me see it.
はしっ SNATCH
Hey! That's private!
.....
I love you, ren
IT'S NOT A MOVIE!
QUIVER QUIVER
ハラハラ
BADUM BADUM
ドキドキ

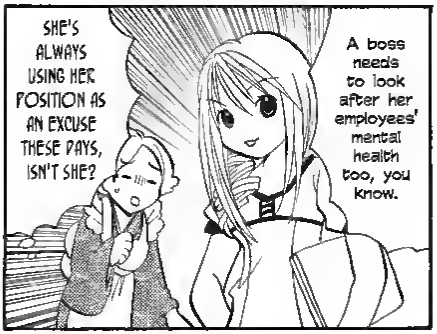
...It's fine. It's my fault she was here in the first place.
Um... I'm sorry.
You just came to get money from me so you could go out with some guy.
...I thought as much.
I love it! Thank you!
You know, she was nice at first.
but I've already washed my hands of you.
Sorry,
Ugh, I don't want THIS one!
And that!
Buy me that!
But... they all change
once they start dating me.
BANG
Please leave.
sworn off re-lation-ships.
So I've
SSH SSH
Oh... uh... I was just, um...

.....
Well... getting money and presents does make me happy, but...
How do you
make someone happy,
.....
if not with money and presents?
むにっ
PINCH
right now,
what would really make me happy... would be if I could cheer you up.
.....
ドキッ?...
FLUTTER
Teeheeheehee...
TICKLE TICKLE
くすぐり くすぐり
SHE CAN'T BE HONEST ABOUT HOW SHE REALLY FEELS.
OWWW!
Hug!
STRETCH
That's not enough to cheer me up! You need to go further!
BUT... YOU ARE HAPPY.
That's not the same thing!

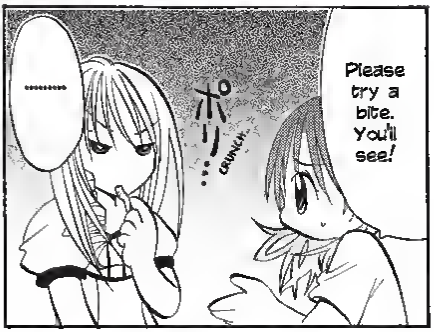
ファファ 11
poor poor

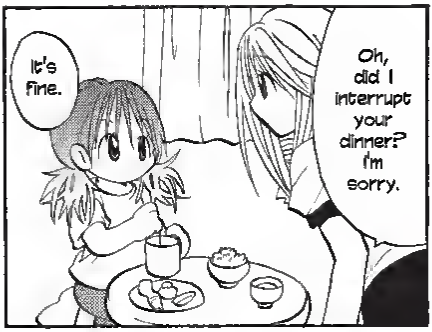


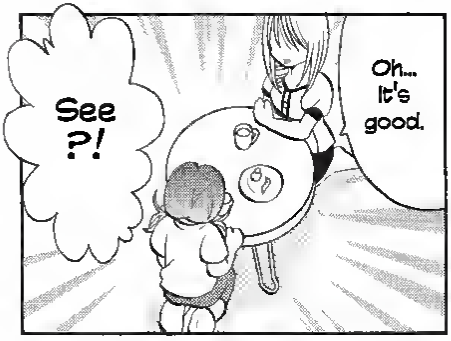


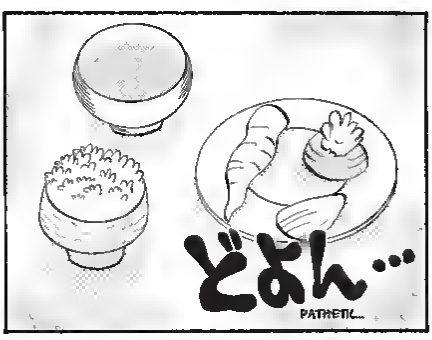

SHE'S ALWAYS USING HER POSITION AS AN EXCUSE THESE DAYS, ISN'T SHE?
A boss needs to look after her employees' mental health too, you know.

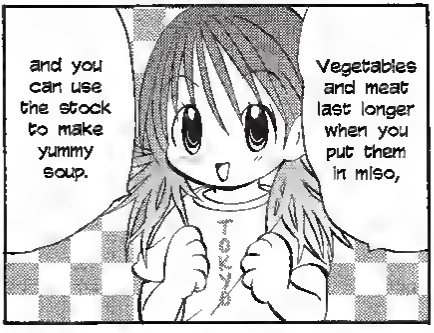
Ack! Ren-san!
Hello.
It's in even worse shape than I expected.
So this is it.
Oh, thank you!
I happened to be in the neighborhood, so I figured I'd drop it off!
You left your book at work.
Delicacies of the World
PANG...
SHE'S ALL ALONE... IN A PLACE LIKE THIS ...
Sure.
Would you like to stay for tea?
Huh?
Pardon me, Miss... but her apartment's over here.
Th-this is a studio apartment!
CLACK
Is the parlor through here?
Not so loud!
I-isn't that an abandoned building?

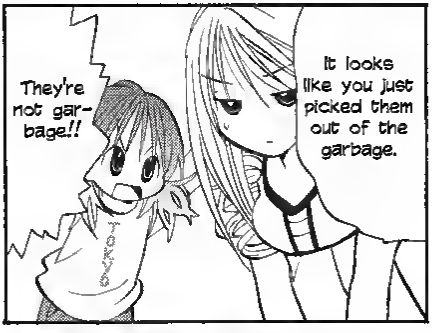

.....
ポリ…
CRUNCH...
Please try a bite. You'll see!

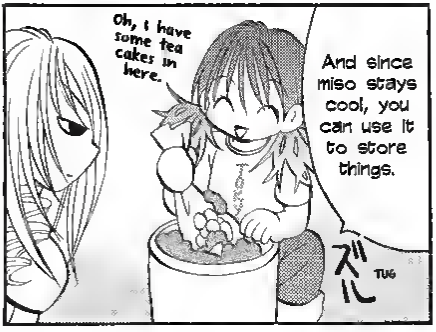

It's fine.
Oh, did I interrupt your dinner? I'm sorry.

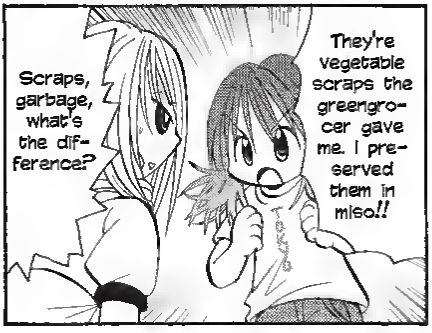

See ?!
Oh... It's good.


どよん…
PATHETIC...

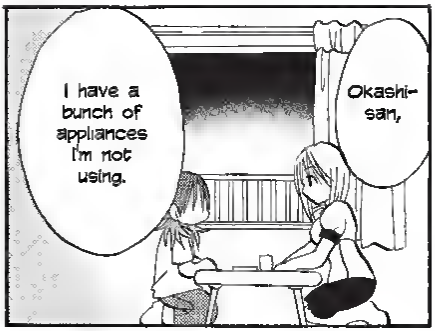

and you can use the stock to make yummy soup.
Vegetables and meat last longer when you put them in miso,

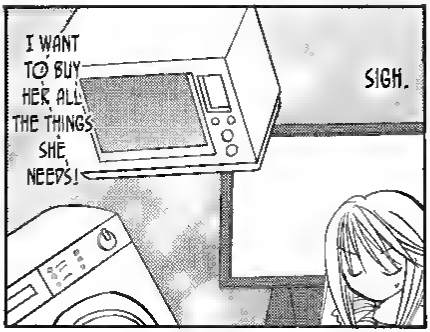

They're not garbage!!
It looks like you just picked them out of the garbage.


Oh, I have some tea cakes in here.
And since miso stays cool, you can use it to store things.
ズル
TUG

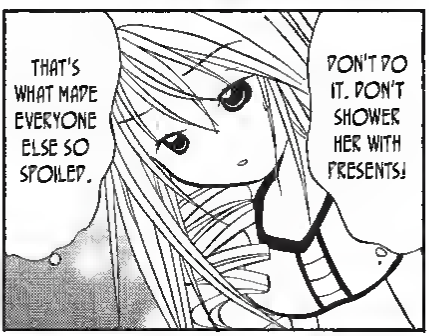

Scraps, garbage, what's the difference?
They're vegetable scraps the greengrocer gave me. I preserved them in miso!!

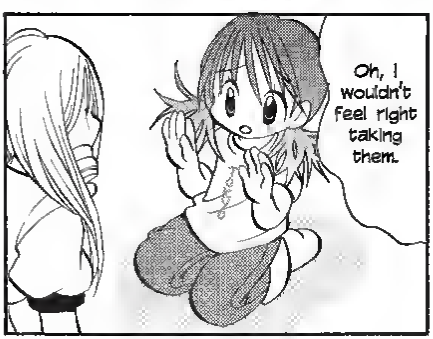
I-I listen to the news!
Not that you have a TV to watch it on.
W-... well, no.
Wait a minute. You don't even have a refrigerator?
and now for today's news
See, my neighbors are watching the news right now.
Why are you mad?!
RAWR!
How do you live like this?!
Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.
a settlement was reached
NOD NOD
We have to think about that these days, you know. About...
It's fine. This is more eco-friendly anyway.
She has no idea what she's hearing !!
Lucky hm.
A subtle man was rich?
You need to watch the news more often !
CO²!
um... UCC emissions.

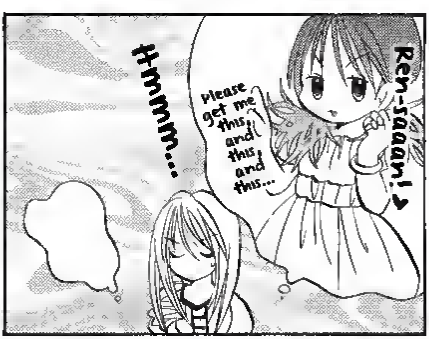

Okashi-san,
I have a bunch of appliances I'm not using.

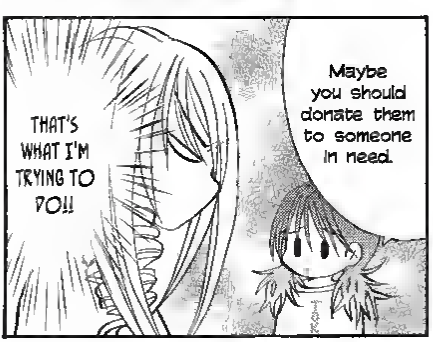

I WANT TO BUY HER ALL THE THINGS SHE NEEDS!
SIGH.

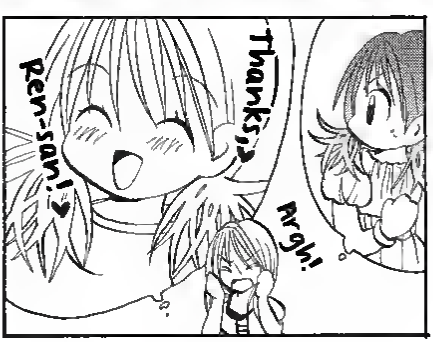
Would you be willing to take them off my hands?
What?!


DON'T DO IT. DON'T SHOWER HER WITH PRESENTS!
THAT'S WHAT MADE EVERYONE ELSE SO SPOILED.

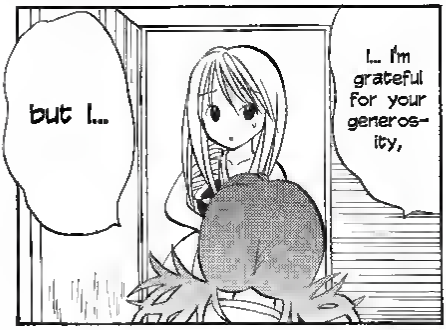

Oh, I wouldn't feel right taking them.

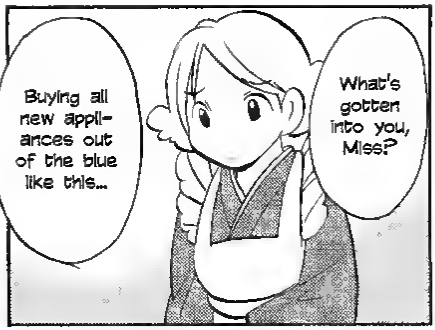

Ren-saaan!♥
Please get me this, and this and this...
Hmmm...

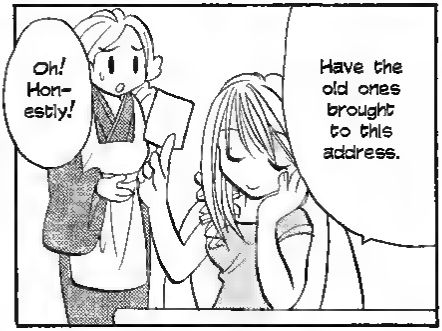

Maybe you should donate them to someone in need.
THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO!!

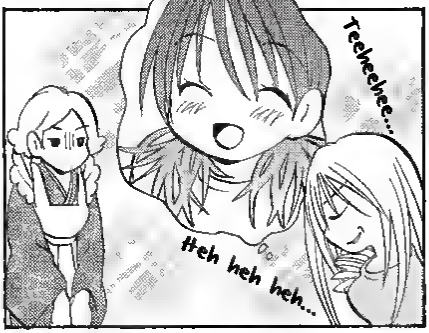

Argh!
Thanks,
Ren-san!♥

↑She came over, since Nako doesn't have a phone.

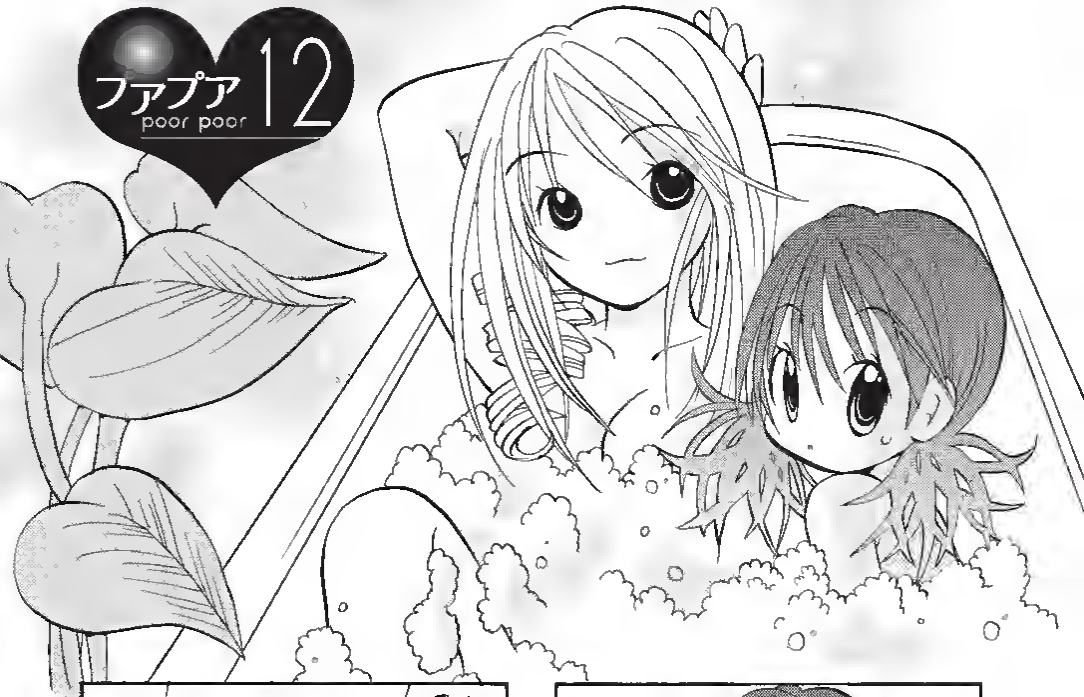


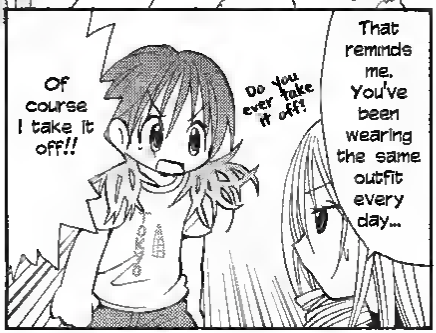


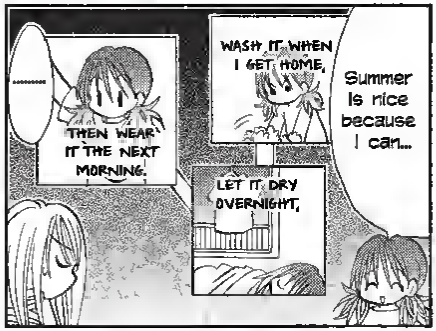


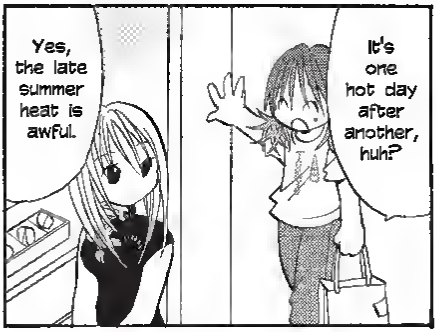


ファプア poor poor 12





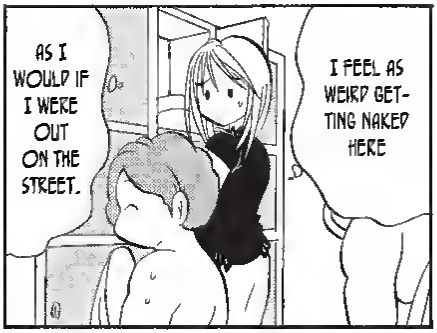


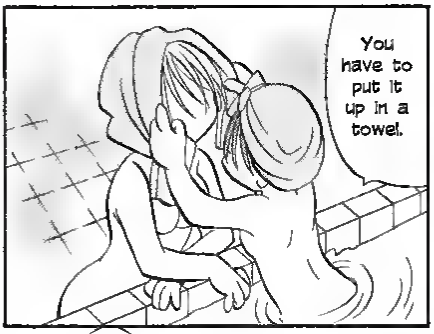


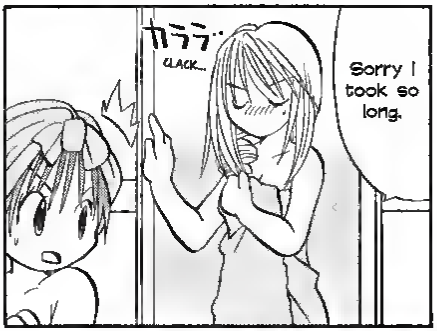
Huuuh ?
A public bath, huh? I've never been to one.
I didn't see a bathtub at your apartment.
That reminds me,
Come to think of it, I've never shared a bath with someone.
I've been to spas, but I've always worn a bathing suit there.
Of course !
Do you bathe regularly?
.....
Not even on a school trip?
O-oh, I see.
I go to a public bath!
RICH PEOPLE.
And I only had to share a room with one person.
We went to Paris. There were no public baths there.
Wha-...
Once every three days, anyway.
The other two days...

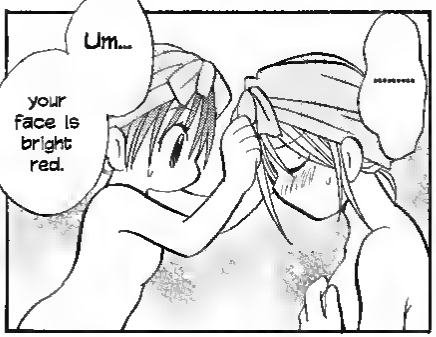
It looks like a set from a period drama.
This is it!
Soleil Bath
Want to go to the public bath with me today, then?!
.....
ドキドキ-
BADUM BADUM-
We take our clothes off in here.
You mean that you're a lesbian?
B-but what about my orientation?
BUT IT SHOULD BE OKAY TO STEAL A QUICK GLIMPSE, RIGHT?
チラッ
PHWP
I SHOULDN'T STARE. THAT WOULD BE WEIRD.
Well, I'm not your type at all, right?
...Do you really want to take a bath with someone like me?
That was quick!
I'm going in now!
チラ
GLANCE
I've never taken a bath with my father, either.
It'll be just like taking a bath with my dad!

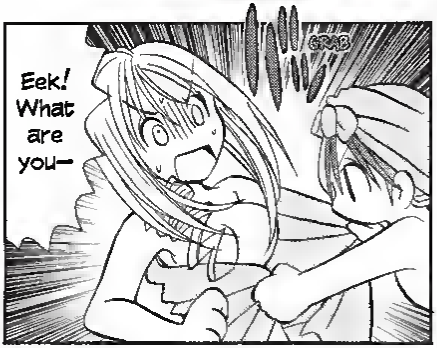
I-I can't?
And you can't leave your hair down like that, either.

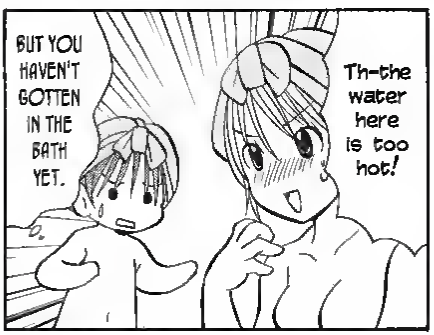

I FEEL AS WEIRD GETTING NAKED HERE
AS I WOULD IF I WERE OUT ON THE STREET.

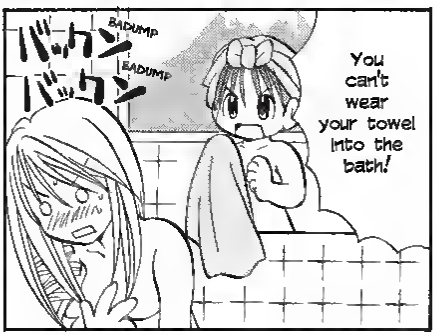

You have to put it up in a towel.


Sorry I took so long.
CLACK...

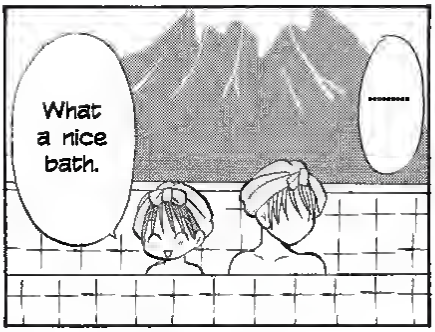

Um... your face is bright red.
.....


Eek! What are you—
GRAB

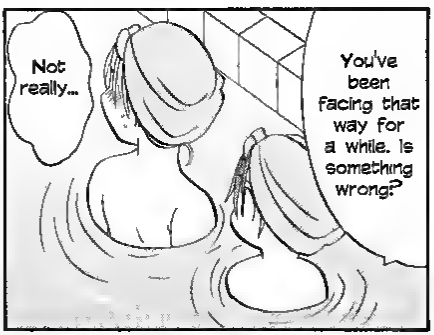

BUT YOU HAVEN'T GOTTEN IN THE BATH YET.
Th-the water here is too hot!


バックン バックン
BADUMP BADUMP
You can't wear your towel into the bath!

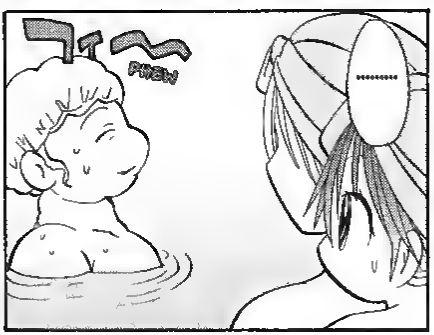
Huh? Wait a minute...
Get out.
I'll wash your back for you.

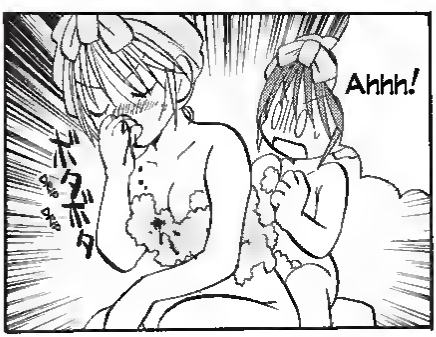

What a nice bath.
.....

Ah! Ah!
ゴシャゴシャ
ゴシャゴシャ
SCRUBBA SCRUBBA
The soap here smells like peaches. Isn't it nice?


Not really...
You've been facing that way for a while. Is something wrong?

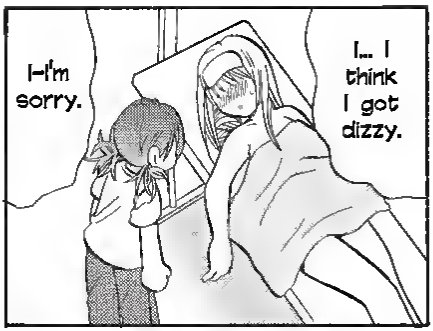
I don't remember them being that color before.
Oh, the bubbles are pink.

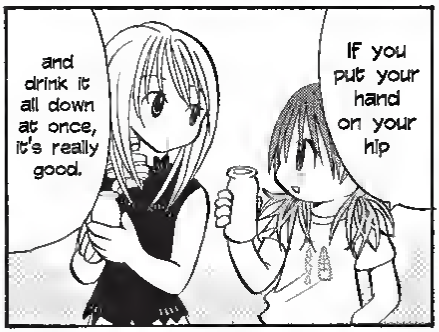

PHEW
.....


Ahhh!
ガタガタ
Quiv Quiv

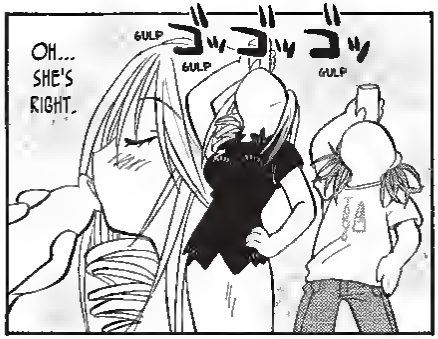
What are you talking about?!
To each her own.
Oh... Well, you like what you like.

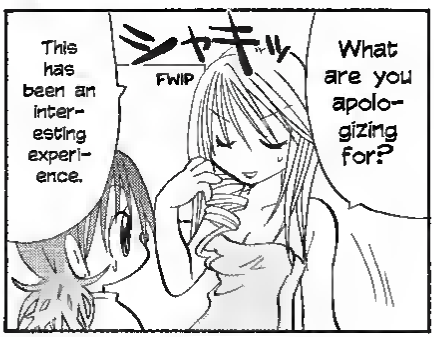
I'm thirsty. Shall we get something to drink?
Okay... I'll have some apple milk.

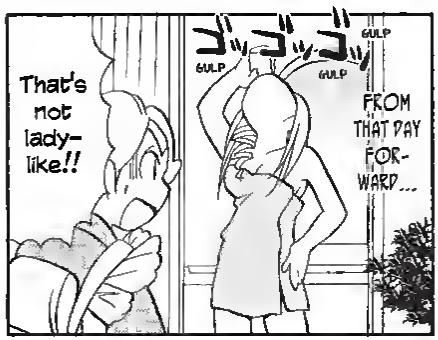

I... I think I got dizzy.
I-I'm sorry.

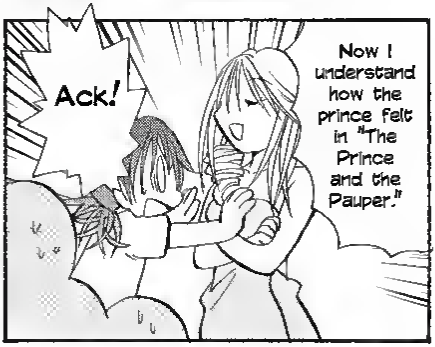

If you put your hand on your hip
and drink it all down at once, it's really good.

Oh... She's dressed.
PHEW~

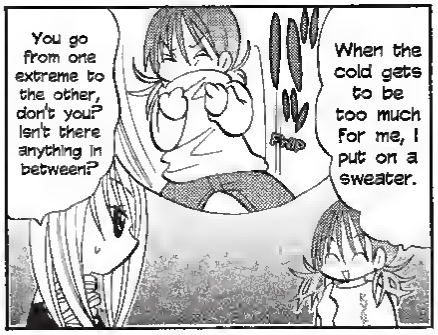

OH... SHE'S RIGHT.
GULP
GULP
GULP

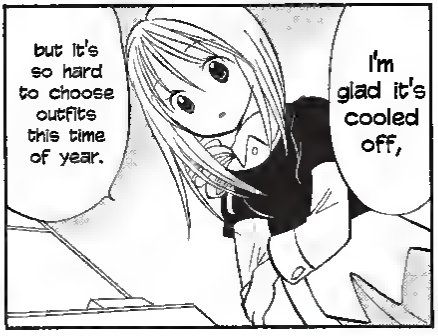

What are you apologizing for?
FWIP
This has been an interesting experience.


That's not lady-like!!
GULP
GULP
GULP
FROM THAT DAY FORWARD...


Now I understand how the prince felt in "The Prince and the Pauper."
Ack!

プアプア poor poor 13

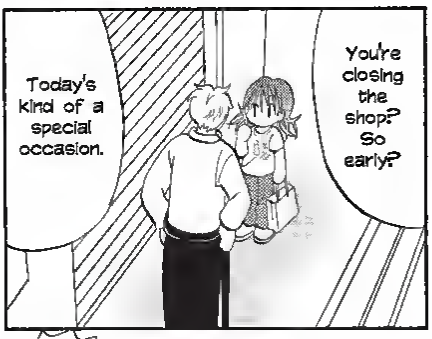

When the cold gets to be too much for me, I put on a sweater.
You go from one extreme to the other, don't you? Isn't there anything in between?



Wow!
Well, we're making her wedding cake.

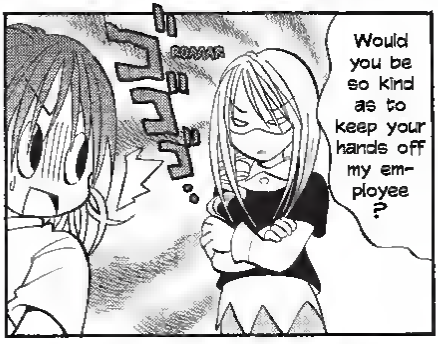
Oh, long time no see, Okashi.
CLACK CLACK
Oh, Furui-kun.

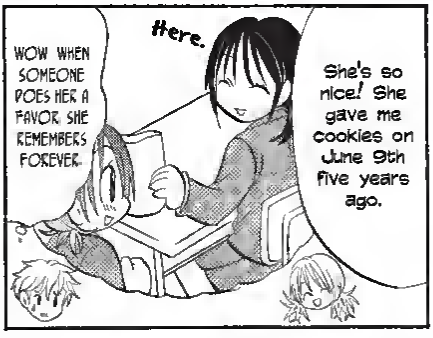
Do you really need a wallet?
I only have $2 left.
I wish I could get her some-thing, but.....


Today's kind of a special occasion.
You're closing the shop? So early?

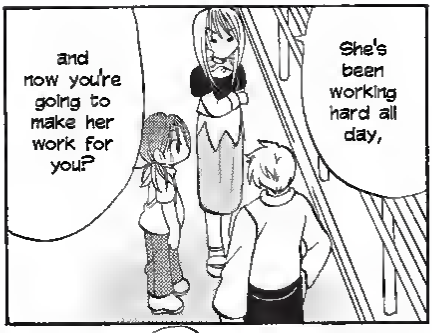
That's a great idea!!
You can put all your good wishes into it!
Oh,
why don't you help me with the cake, then?

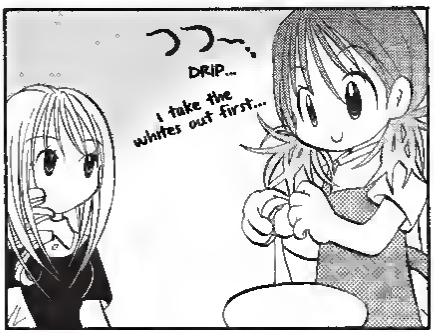
Nakani-shi-san's getting mar-ried?!
Nakanishi —you know, from school— is getting married.

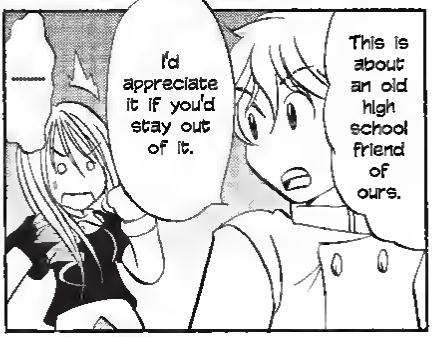

ROAR
Would you be so kind as to keep your hands off my em-ployee?

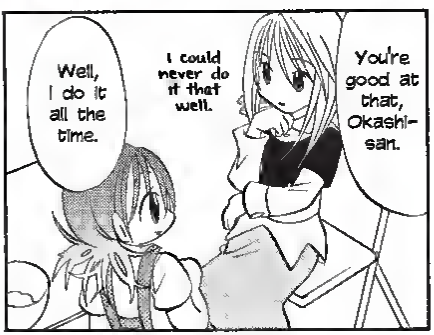

WOW WHEN SOMEONE DOES HER A FAVOR SHE REMEMBERS FOREVER.
there.
She's so nice! She gave me cookies on June 9th five years ago.

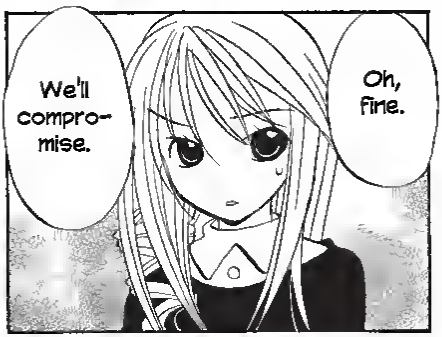
Would you separate these eggs into whites and yolks, Okashi?
Okay!

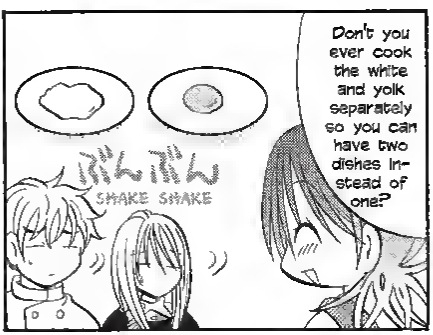

She's been working hard all day,
and now you're going to make her work for you?

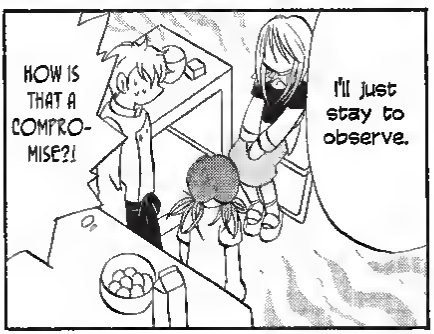

I take the whites out first...
DRIP...

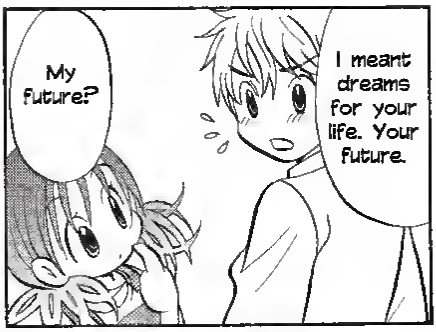

This is about an old high school friend of ours.
I'd appreciate it if you'd stay out of it.
.....


You're good at that, Okashi-san.
I could never do it that well.
Well, I do it all the time.

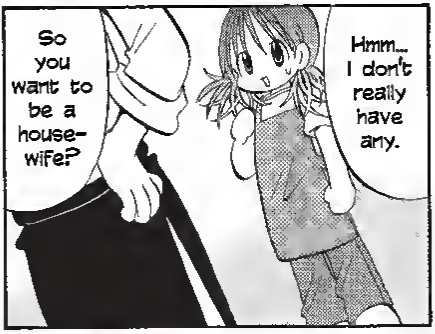

Oh, fine.
We'll compro-mise.


Don't you ever cook the white and yolk separately so you can have two dishes in-stead of one?
ぶんぶん
SHAKE SHAKE


I'll just stay to observe.
HOW IS THAT A COMPRO-MISE?!


My future?
I meant dreams for your life. Your future.

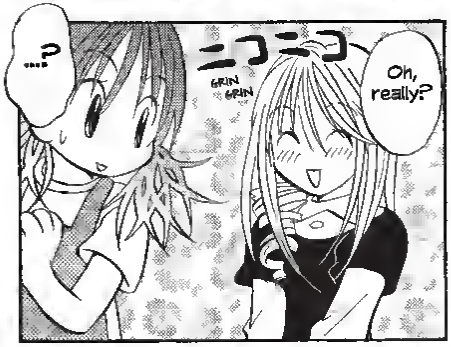
WHRRR...


So you want to be a housewife?
Hmm... I don't really have any.

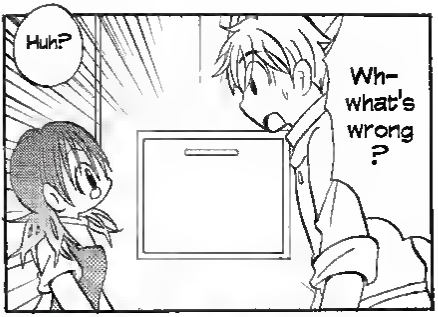
Well... baking is my specialty.
.....
Wow, you're good at that!

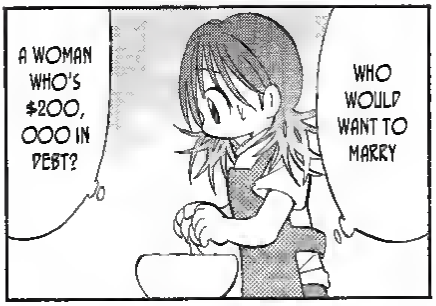
don't think I'll ever get married, either.
.....
I...

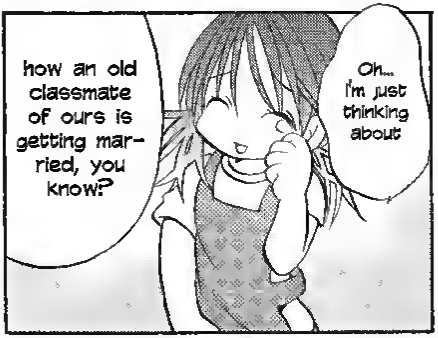
Dreams?
Do you have any dreams, Okashi?

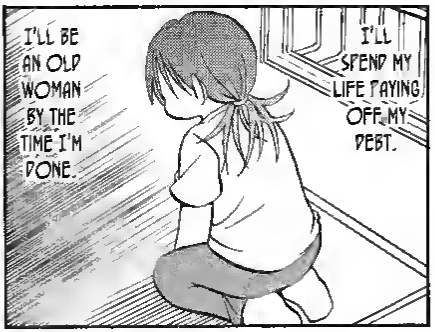

...?
GRIN GRIN
Oh, really?

That's not what I meant!
To eat a whole cake in one sitting, maybe.
I could make that one come true right now!
MUTTER MUTTER

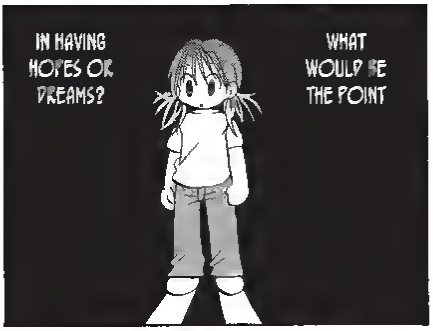

Huh?
Wh-what's wrong?

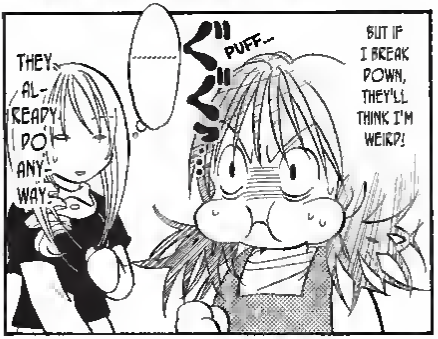

A WOMAN WHO'S $200,000 IN DEBT?
WHO WOULD WANT TO MARRY


how an old classmate of ours is getting married, you know?
Oh... I'm just thinking about


I'LL BE AN OLD WOMAN BY THE TIME I'M DONE.
I'LL SPEND MY LIFE PAYING OFF MY DEBT.

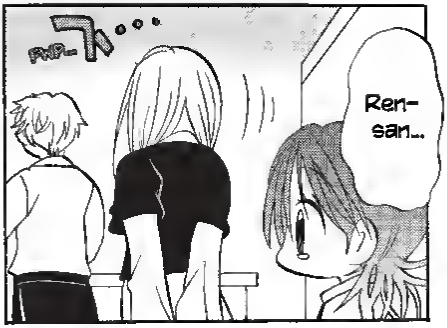
OH... I DON'T THINK I CAN STOP CRYING.
PHEW
SNIFF...
Oh, is that all?

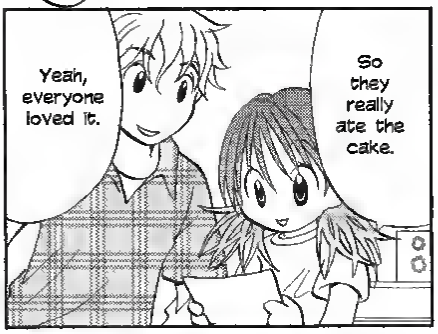

IN HAVING HOPES OR DREAMS?
WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT


THEY ALREADY DO ANYWAY.
PUFF...
BUT IF I BREAK DOWN, THEY'LL THINK I'M WEIRD!

ALL ALONE... FOREVER.
DRIP...
I JUST HAVE TO KEEP ON...

LATER...
Here's a photo from the wedding.
Wow! So pretty!

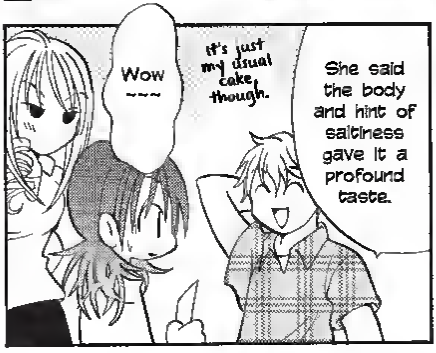

PUP...
Ren-san...

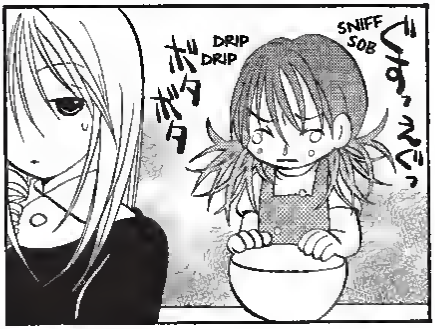

Yeah, everyone loved it.
So they really ate the cake.

I don't know the real reason you're upset,
I'm not looking. So if you want to cry, just let it all out.

...Oh...
She asked me to pass on her thanks.
And Nakanishi was thrilled with it.

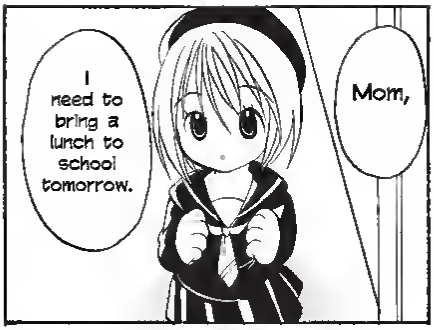
Ren-san...
but I've heard that crying can relieve stress.

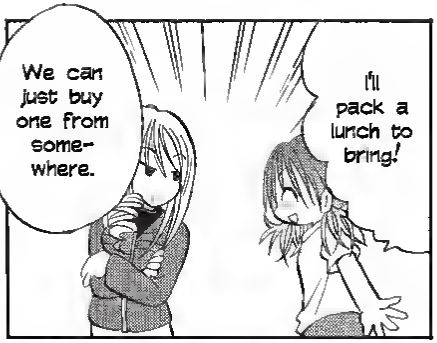

Wow ~~~
It's just my usual cake, though.
She said the body and hint of saltiness gave it a profound taste.


ポタ ポタ
DRIP DRIP
SNIFF SOB
ぐすっ、ぐすっ

プアプア 14
poor poor
I'M OTSUKA REN.
I RUN A SHOP THAT SELLS POWER STONES.
Isn't it time you got rid of that worn-out paper bag?
I'll give you as many new ones as you want.
Oh, but...
THE GIRL WHO'S WORKING FOR ME RIGHT NOW
Good morning!
IS THE POOREST PERSON I'VE EVER MET.
I like the picture on this one. It's cute.
SO SHE DOES HAVE PREFERENCES ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT.

Oh, I see.
They were always busy with work!
And yet you're still wearing short sleeves?
It sure feels like fall now, huh?
BADUM
Would you like to go there together on our next day off, then?
with lovely autumn foliage.
That reminds me, there's a park in a nearby suburb
I've always wanted to try collecting autumn leaves.
FLUSTERED
Y-you've never invited me to do anything with you before.
Th-this is so sudden...
Oh.
Watase used to take me there all the time when I was young.
I KNEW IT MUST HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH FOOD.
I've heard they make good tempura.
PUFF
Your parents didn't take you?


I need to bring a lunch to school tomorrow.
Mom,

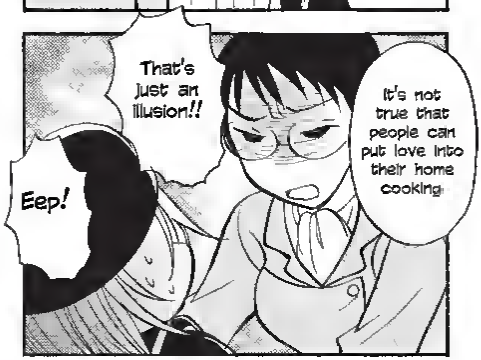

We can just buy one from some-where.
I'll pack a lunch to bring!

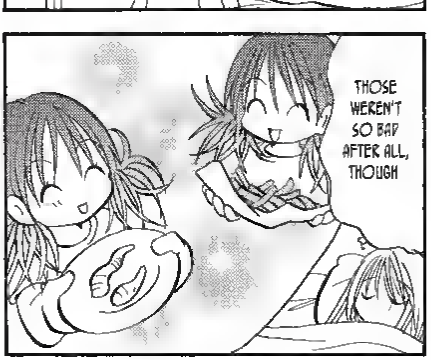
take care of that, won't she? Like usual?
Watase will

you need homemade food for an outing like this.
What? No,

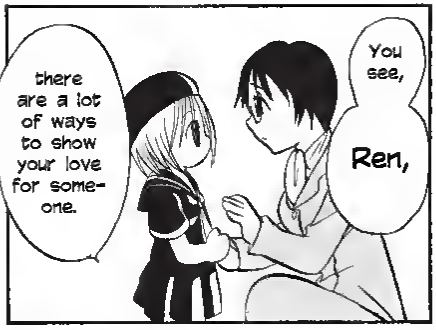
Ren...
I want you to do it.
Can't you make me one?

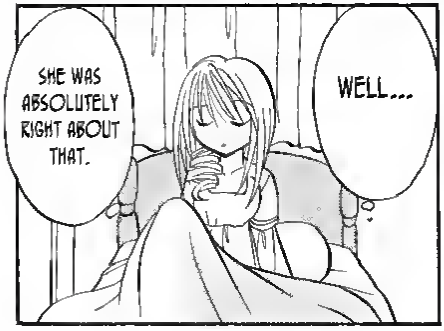
BREAD CRUSTS OR WHITE RADISH TIPS OR SOME-THING
KNOWING HER, SHE'LL PACK
I'll give it all I've got!


Eep!
That's just an illusion!!
It's not true that people can put love into their home cooking


THOSE WEREN'T SO BAD AFTER ALL, THOUGH

Just a dream, huh?
.....

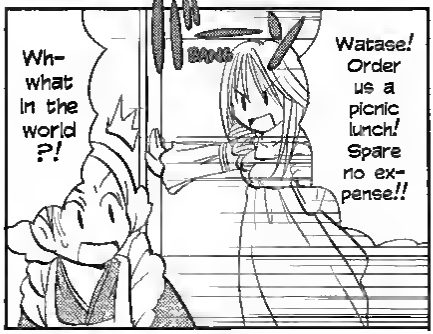

You see, Ren,
there are a lot of ways to show your love for someone.


SHE WAS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT ABOUT THAT.
WELL...

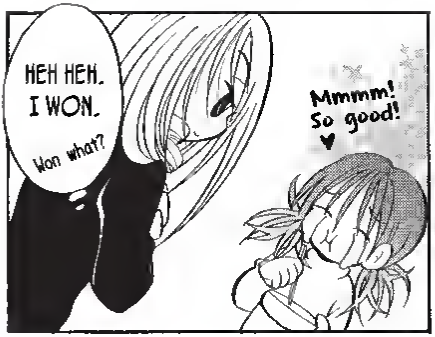
but I work hard at my job instead
I can't do things around the house,

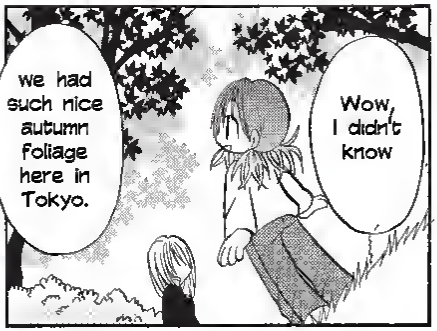
I'M NOT LOOKING FORWARD TO THE LUNCH SHE'S MAKING.
THERE'S NO SPECIAL MEANING IN HOME-COOKED FOOD.

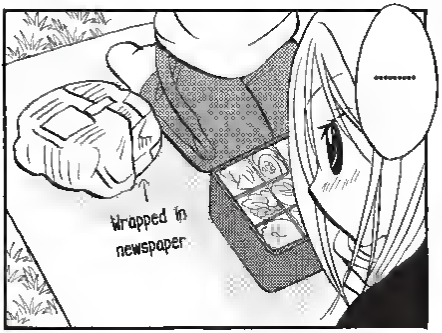
so that you'll never lack for anything.

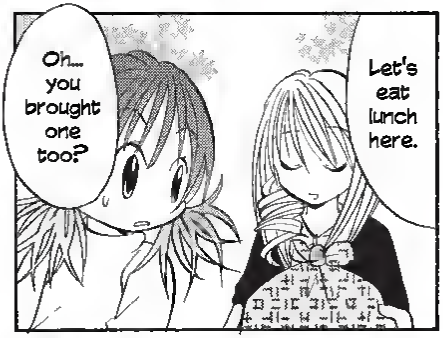

Wh-what in the world?!
BANG
Watase! Order us a picnic lunch! Spare no expense!!

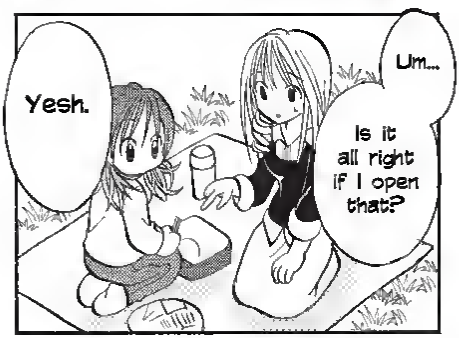
the expression of my love for you.
Please consider that

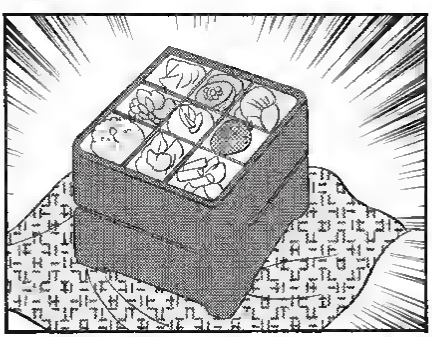


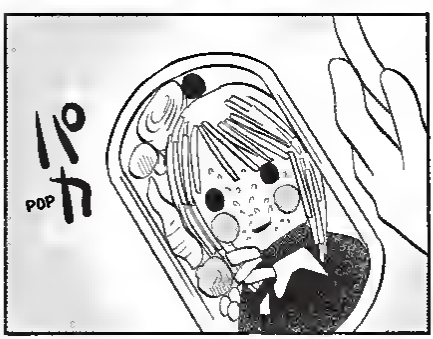


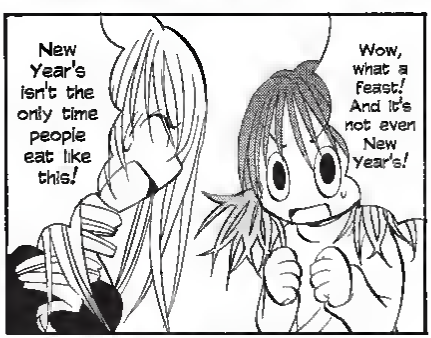












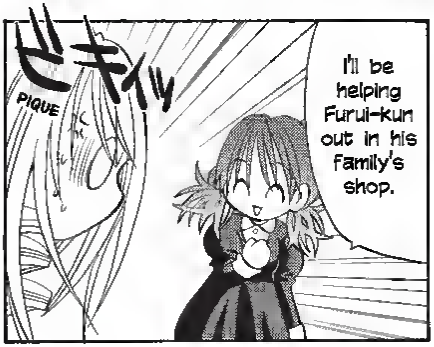
* Multi-tiered lunch boxes are particularly common at New Year's. Nako also makes the faulty assumption that traditional New Year's foods are included in the lunch box because it's multi tiered

May I eat it?
Oh... Sure, if you want...
This is...
My mom used to make them for me.
Oh... It's good.
Yay! ♪
Omelet.
When it looks fun,
Shredded egg crepes.
Seaweed.
white radish typ.
that makes up for not having much in there.
MY MOTHER .....
WASN'T WRONG!
Ren-san?
I'm sorry... I know it's not much.
.....
Thank you.
FOR SOME-THING LIKE THIS.
BUT... I WAS LONG-ING

プアプア 15
poor poor

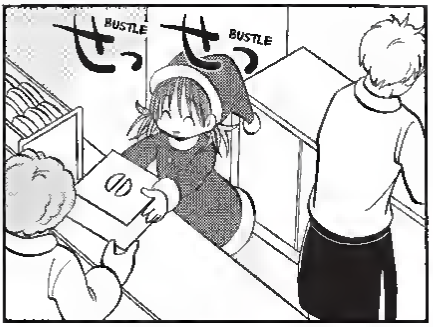
Um,
I bet it's something dreary, like making a tree out of a white radish tip.

I'M KIND OF BROKE.
I'M OKASHI NAKO.


PIQUE
I'll be helping Furui-kun out in his family's shop.

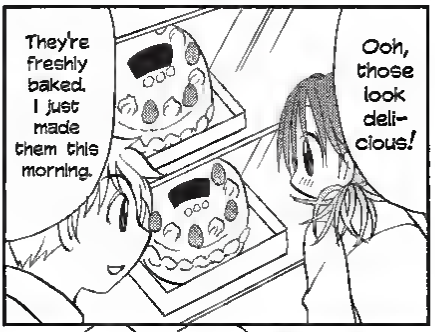
Okashi-san,
what do you do for Christ-mas?

I'm only your boss.
Y-you're right...
Because they're short-staffed that day...
Why would you do that?!
I went too far.
Don't worry, I won't go until I'm done with my work here.
But you aren't even free, are you?!
Oh? Would you like me to cancel your order for Christmas dinner, then?
Watase... I don't think she can come on Christmas Eve.
どーん... TA-DA...
.....
Just tell him no.
SHE'S REALLY GOING TO EAT ALL THAT?!
Hmph.
No, it's fine. I'll just eat it all myself.
STAB
I don't think you have any right to tell me to do that, Ren-san.


BUSTLE
BUSTLE

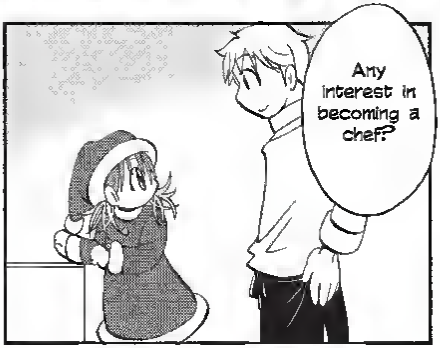
Hey, Okashi. Thanks for helping us out.
Good evening!

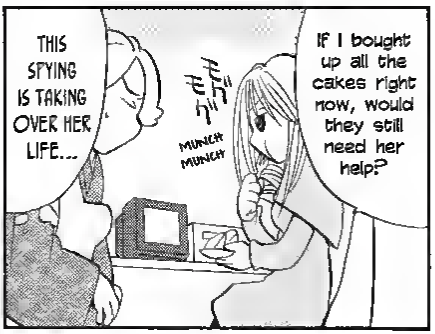
Really? I think I'm just normal.
You're a hard worker, Okashi.


They're freshly baked. I just made them this morning.
Ooh, those look delicious!

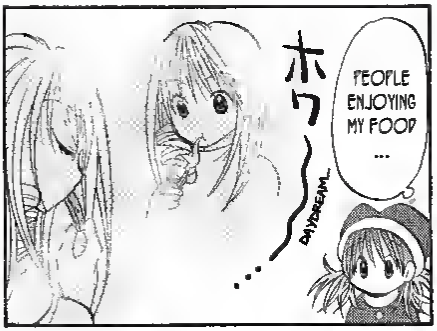
Yeah.
Hey...
remember how you said you don't have any dreams for your future?

but we make up for that in taste.
We can't produce a very large quantity of them,
FILM FILM...

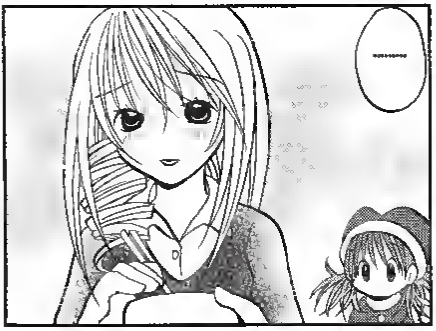

Any interest in becoming a chef?

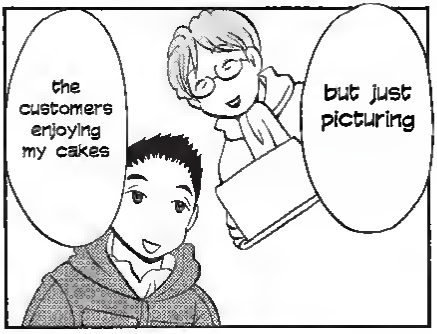

THIS SPYING IS TAKING OVER HER LIFE...
MUNCH MUNCH
If I bought up all the cakes right now, would they still need her help?

I DO LIKE TO COOK ...
A CHEF... A CHEF, HUH?
that you have an instinctive sense for what works.
I've been noticing for a while now
IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO DO IT AS A CAREER.
BUT...
and you even manage to use the inedible parts of food.
You're skilled, too,
INEDIBLE?
Well, the family business played a big part in it,
What made you decide to become a pastry chef, Furui-kun?
ME ...?
A CHEF?
food can make people happy, y'know?
but it was also because...
That's not cooking food, it's eating it!
DAYDREAM...


PEOPLE ENJOYING MY FOOD ...
DAYDREAM...

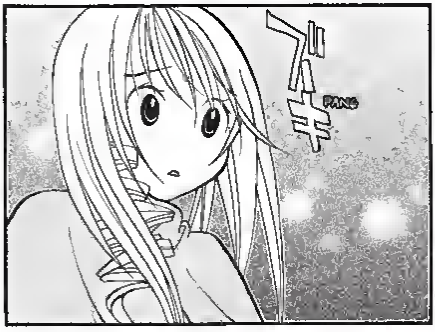
since 4 AM this morning,
I've been baking

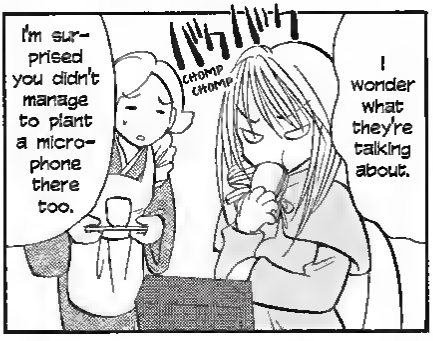

.....


the customers enjoying my cakes
but just picturing

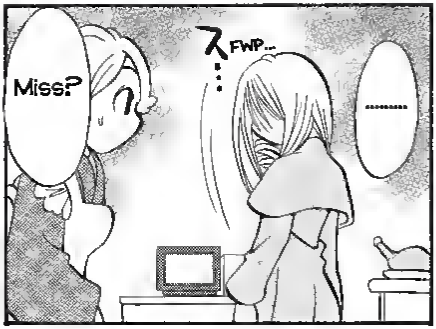
I know what you mean!
Yeah,

is enough to make me happy.

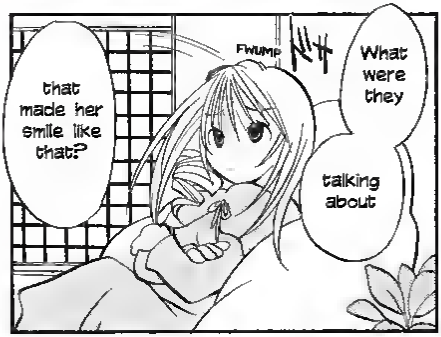

PANG

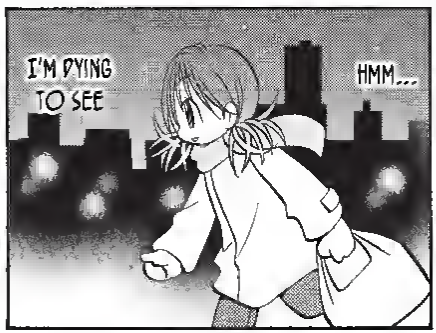

I'm surprised you didn't manage to plant a microphone there too.
CHOMP CHOMP
I wonder what they're talking about.

Um, Furui-kun...
can I buy this cake?

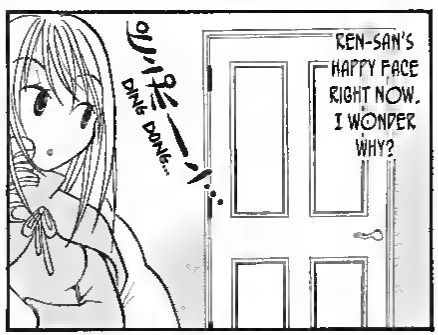

Miss?
FWP...
.....

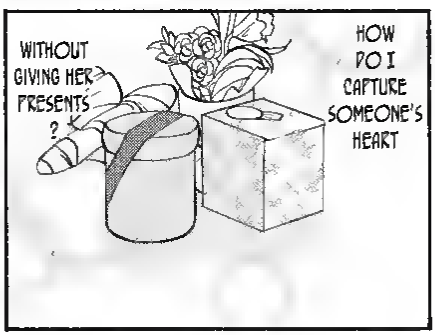
Oh, you can have it for free.
Thanks for helping out today.
Thanks!

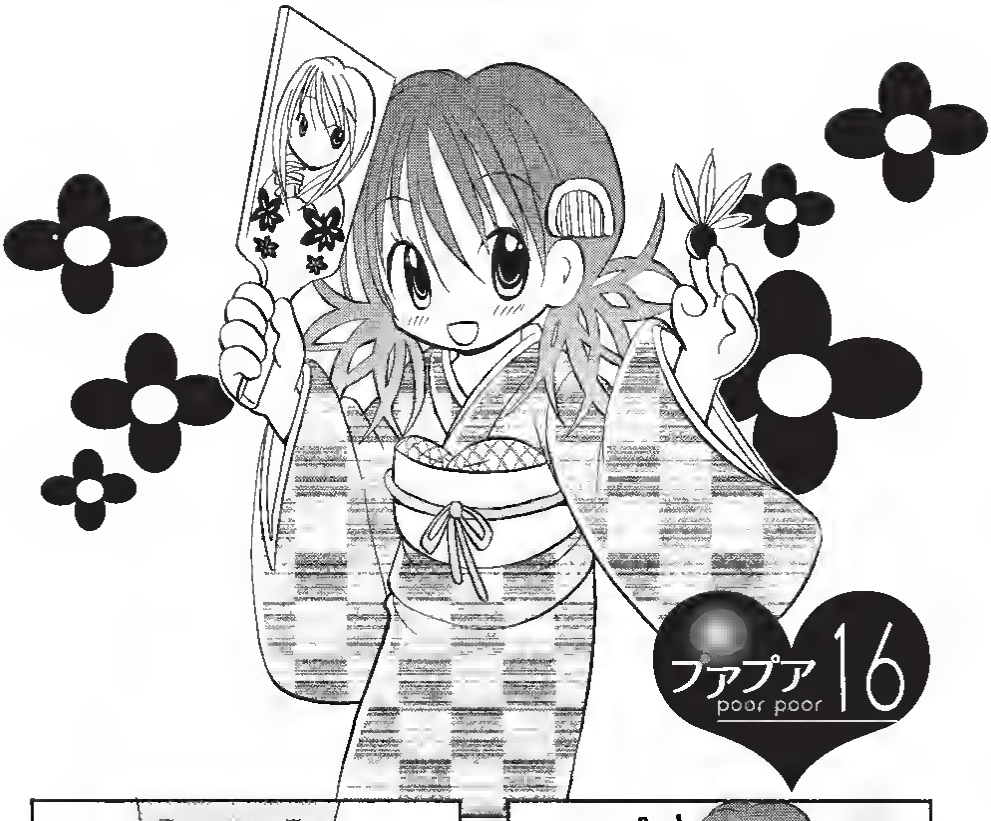

What were they talking about
FWUMP
that made her smile like that?


HMM...
I'M DYING TO SEE

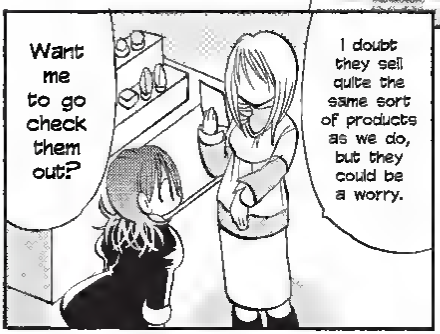
.....

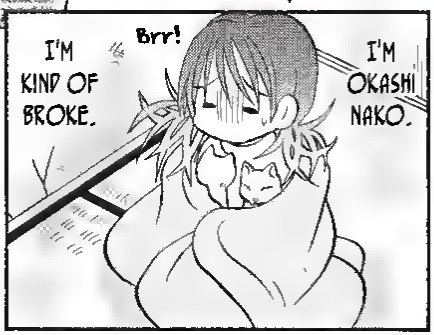

REN-SAN'S HAPPY FACE RIGHT NOW. I WONDER WHY?
DING DONG...

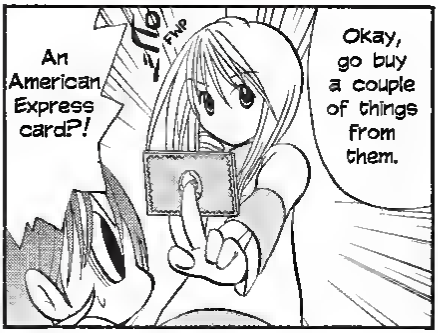

HOW DO I CAPTURE SOMEONE'S HEART
WITHOUT GIVING HER PRESENTS ?

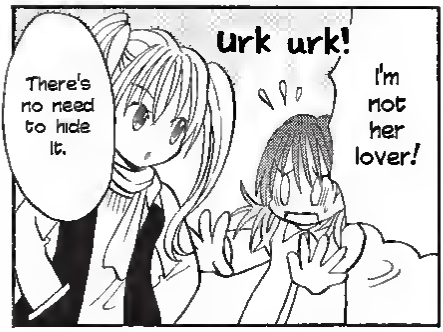


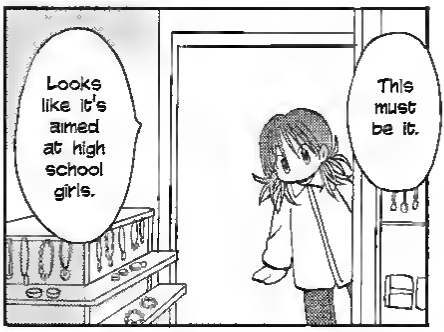
プアプア 16
poor poor

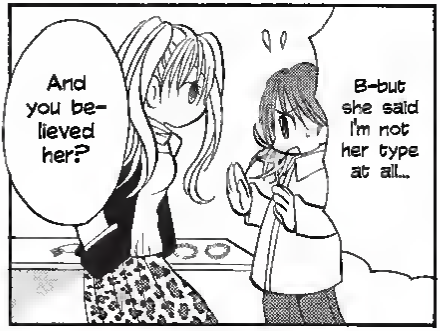


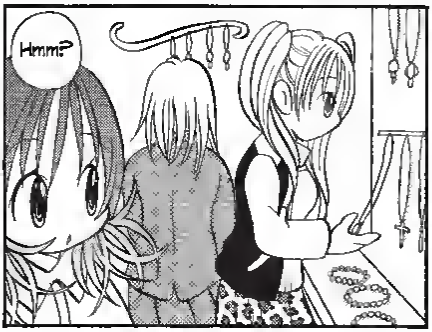




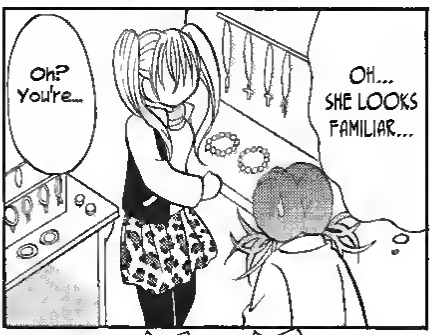

There's no need to hide it.
Urk urk!
I'm not her lover!


Looks like it's aimed at high school girls.
This must be it.


And you believed her?
B-but she said I'm not her type at all...

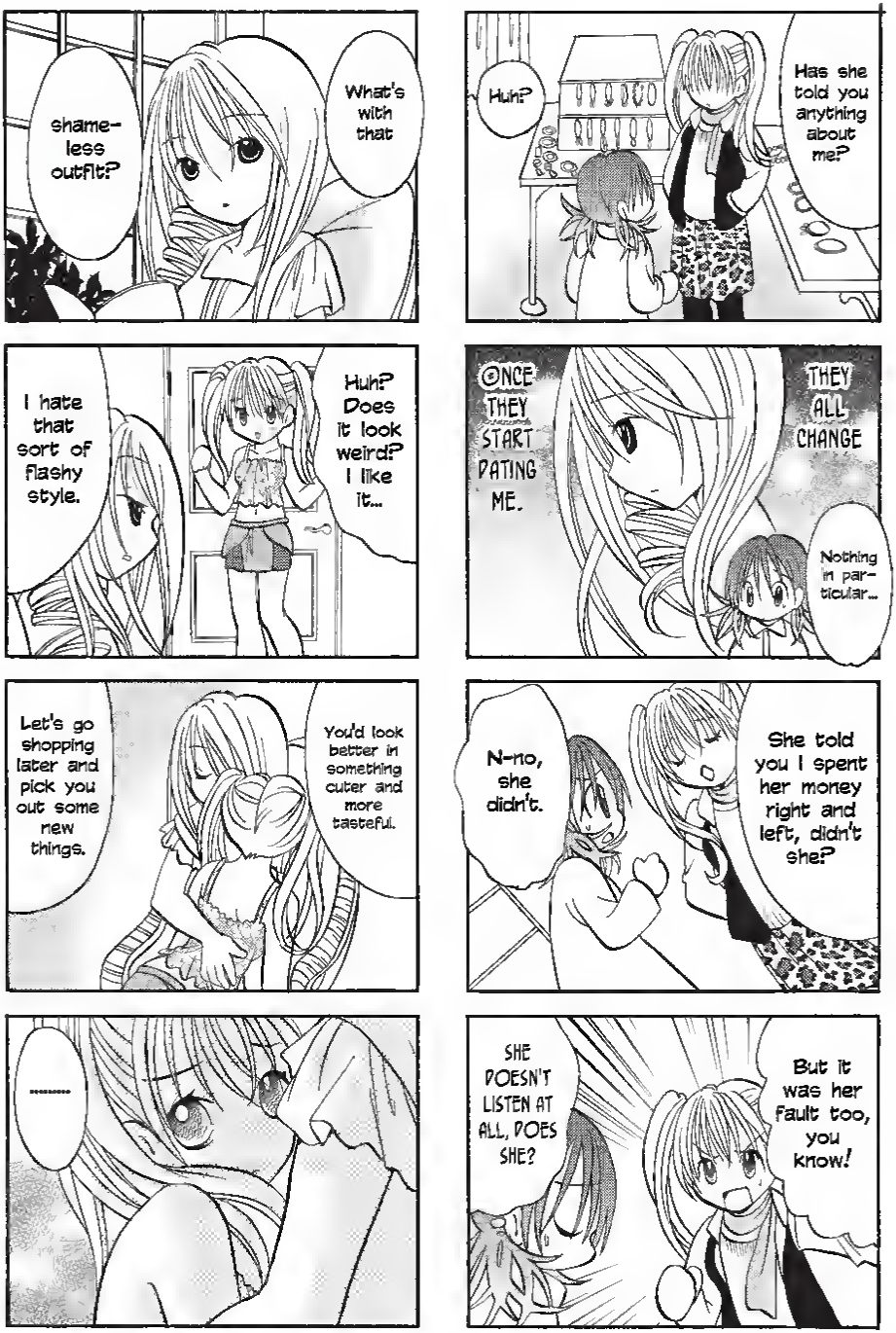

Hmm?

but her real type...
When it comes to looks, she does go more for slender girls like me,


Oh? You're...
Oh... SHE LOOKS FAMILIAR...

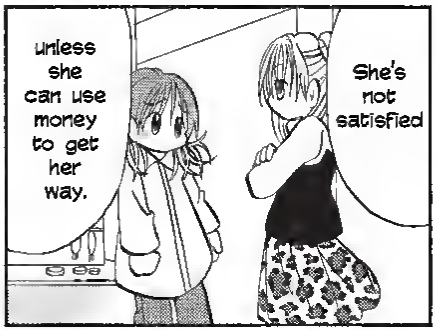
meek girls who'll do whatever she tells them to.
are obedient,

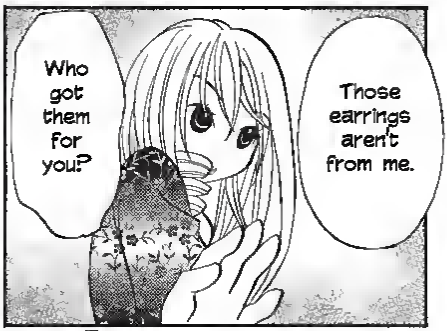
Ren's lover!!
Ren-san's ex!!

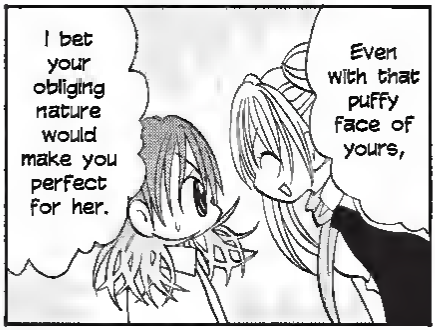

What's with that
shame-less outfit?
Has she told you anything about me?
Huh?
Huh? Does it look weird? I like it...
I hate that sort of flashy style.
ONCE THEY START DATING ME.
THEY ALL CHANGE
Nothing in par-ticular...
You'd look better in something cuter and more tasteful.
Let's go shopping later and pick you out some new things.
She told you I spent her money right and left, didn't she?
N-no, she didn't.
.....
But it was her fault too, you know!
SHE DOESN'T LISTEN AT ALL, DOES SHE?

To Ren,
her girl-friends are no different from her possess-sions.

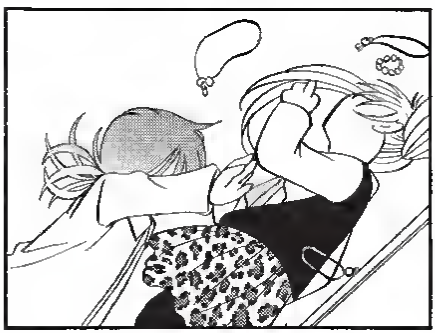
You should tell me when you're going to be out at night.
Why didn't you answer when I called you last night?

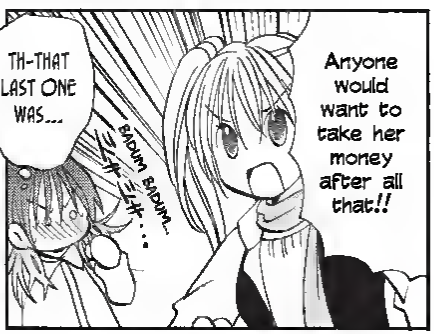

She's not satisfied
unless she can use money to get her way.

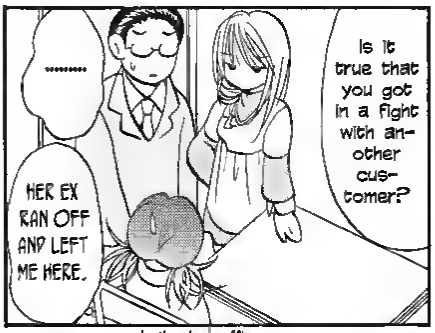

Those earrings aren't from me.
Who got them for you?


Even with that puffy face of yours,
I bet your obliging nature would make you perfect for her.

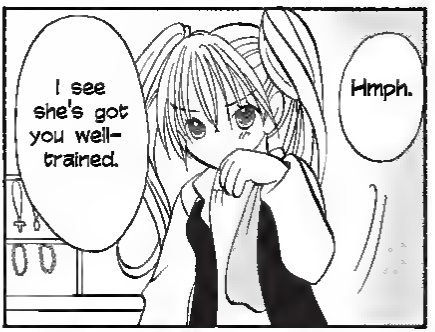
Do you love me?
tell me you love me...
Come on,

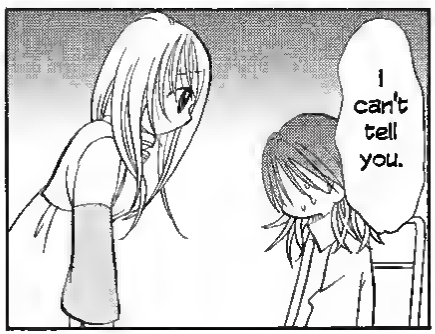


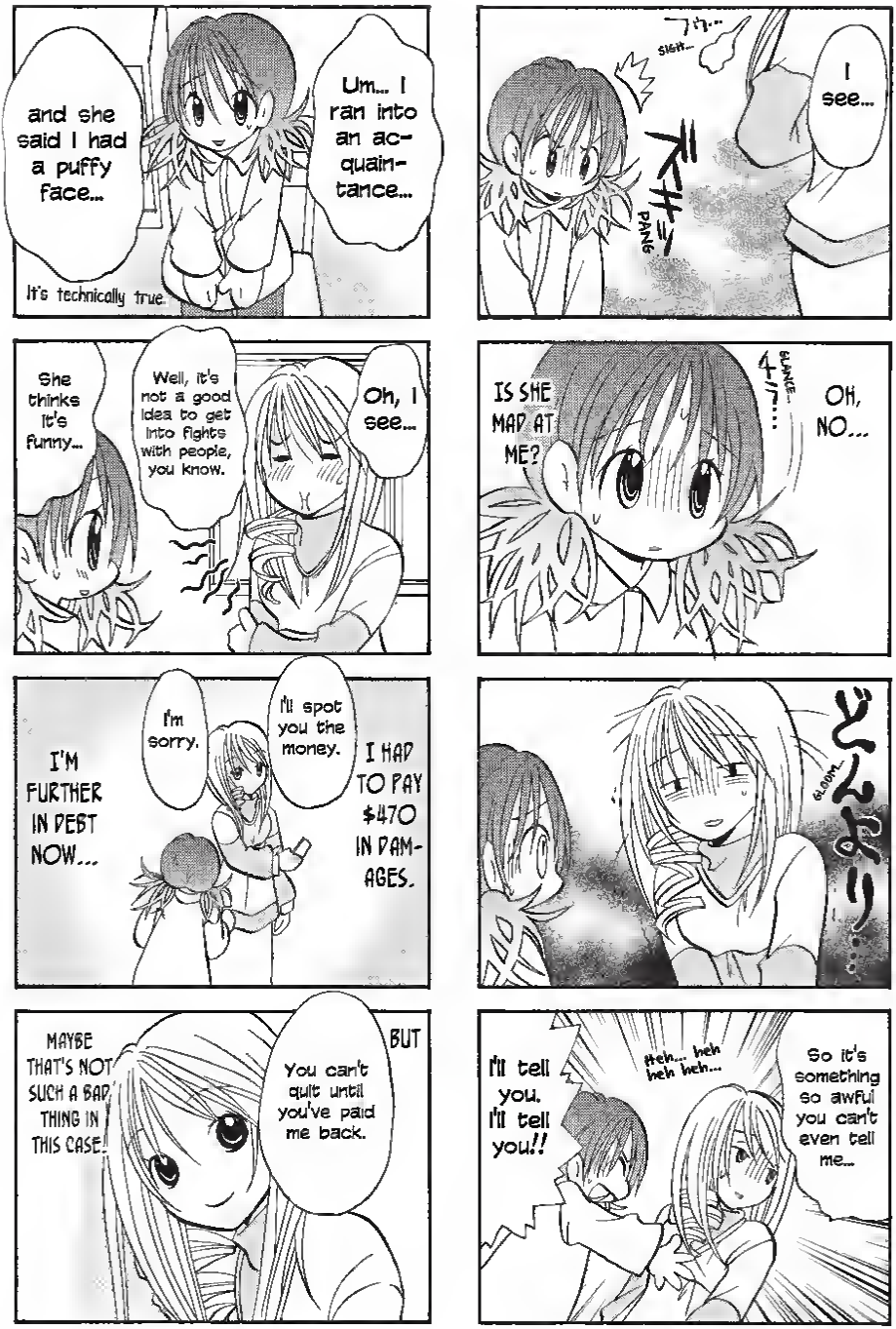

Anyone would want to take her money after all that!!
BADUM BADUM...
TH-THAT LAST ONE WAS...



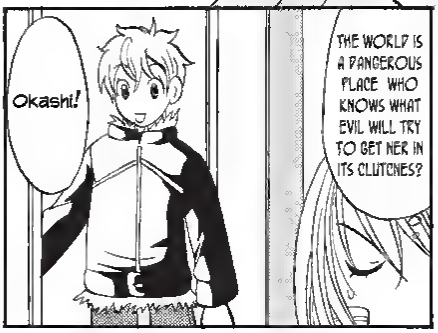
In the shop's office.

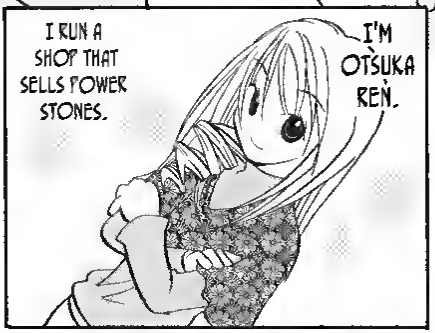





Um... I ran into an acquaintance...
and she said I had a puffy face...
It's technically true.
I see...
sigh...
PANIC
Oh, I see...
Well, it's not a good idea to get into fights with people, you know.
She thinks it's funny...
Oh, NO...
GLANCE
IS SHE MAD AT ME?
I'm sorry.
I'll spot you the money.
I'M FURTHER IN DEBT NOW...
I HAD TO PAY $470 IN DAMAGES.
GLOOM...
BUT
You can't quit until you've paid me back.
MAYBE THAT'S NOT SUCH A BAD THING IN THIS CASE.
So it's something so awful you can't even tell me...
Heh... heh heh heh...
I'll tell you. I'll tell you!!

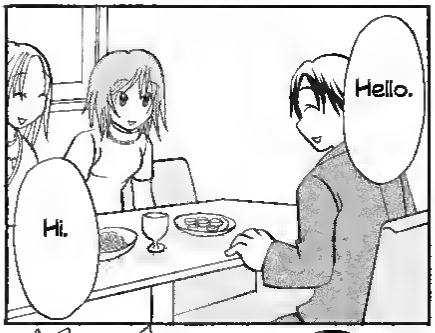
ファプア 17
poor poor


Okashi!
THE WORLD IS A DANGEROUS PLACE. WHO KNOWS WHAT EVIL WILL TRY TO GET HER IN ITS CLUTCHES?

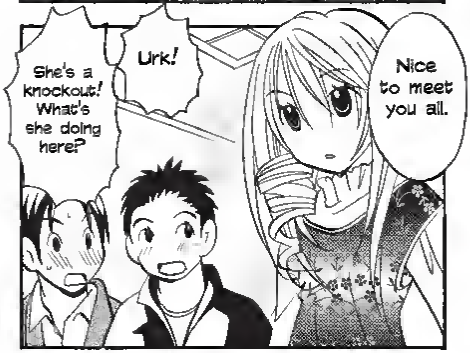

I'M OTSUKA REN.
I RUN A SHOP THAT SELLS POWER STONES.

See ?!!
We're short on people for a group date. Can you come?

OKASHI NAKO WORKS FOR ME PART-TIME.
SHE'S POOR AND SHE DOESN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE WORLD.— YOU KNOW, THE SORT OF PERSON YOU CAN'T HELP BUT LOOK OUT FOR.

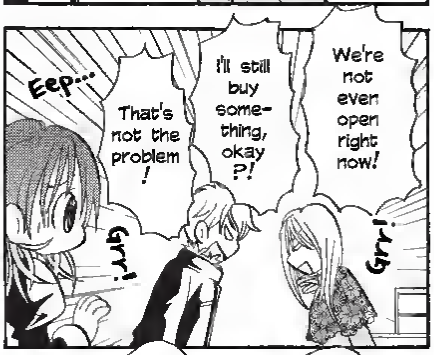

Hello.
Hi.

They're all good guys.
The guys who are coming are old friends of mine from culinary school.


She's a knockout! What's she doing here?
Urk!
Nice to meet you all.

I'm talking to Okashi right now. Not you.
Excuse me... Would you kindly refrain from inviting Okashi-san to indecent events?

It's nice to meet everyone.
Hi.


Eep...
That's not the problem!
I'll still buy something, okay?!
We're not even open right now!
Grr!
Grr!

WHAT'S WITH THESE CHICKS?
SHRUGS...
LASCOTE

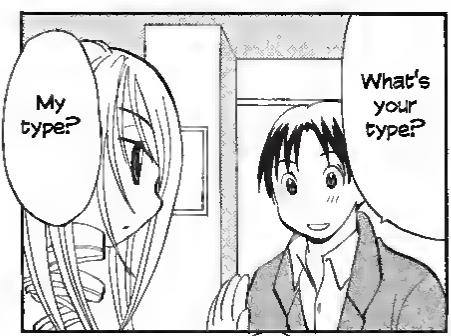
Does it matter what *I* want?!
but Otsuka-san gets to come along as a chaperone.
PANT PANT
Okay, you'll go on the group date, Okashi-san,
HALF AN HOUR LATER ...

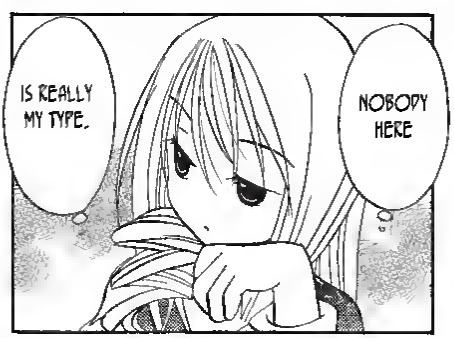
I'm Otsuka Ren.
I run a shop that sells power stones.

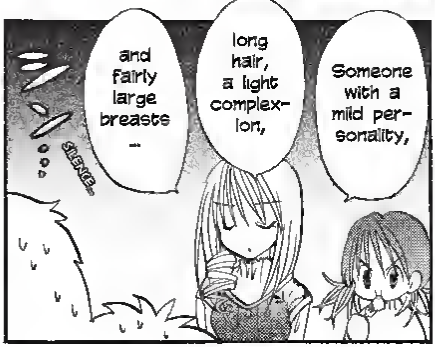
Um, how about you guys introduce yourselves first?
I'm Tamiya. I work at a pastry shop in Shinjuku.

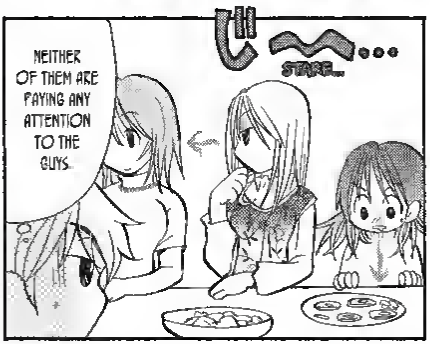
Wow, you run a shop?
You must be loaded!
That rocks!

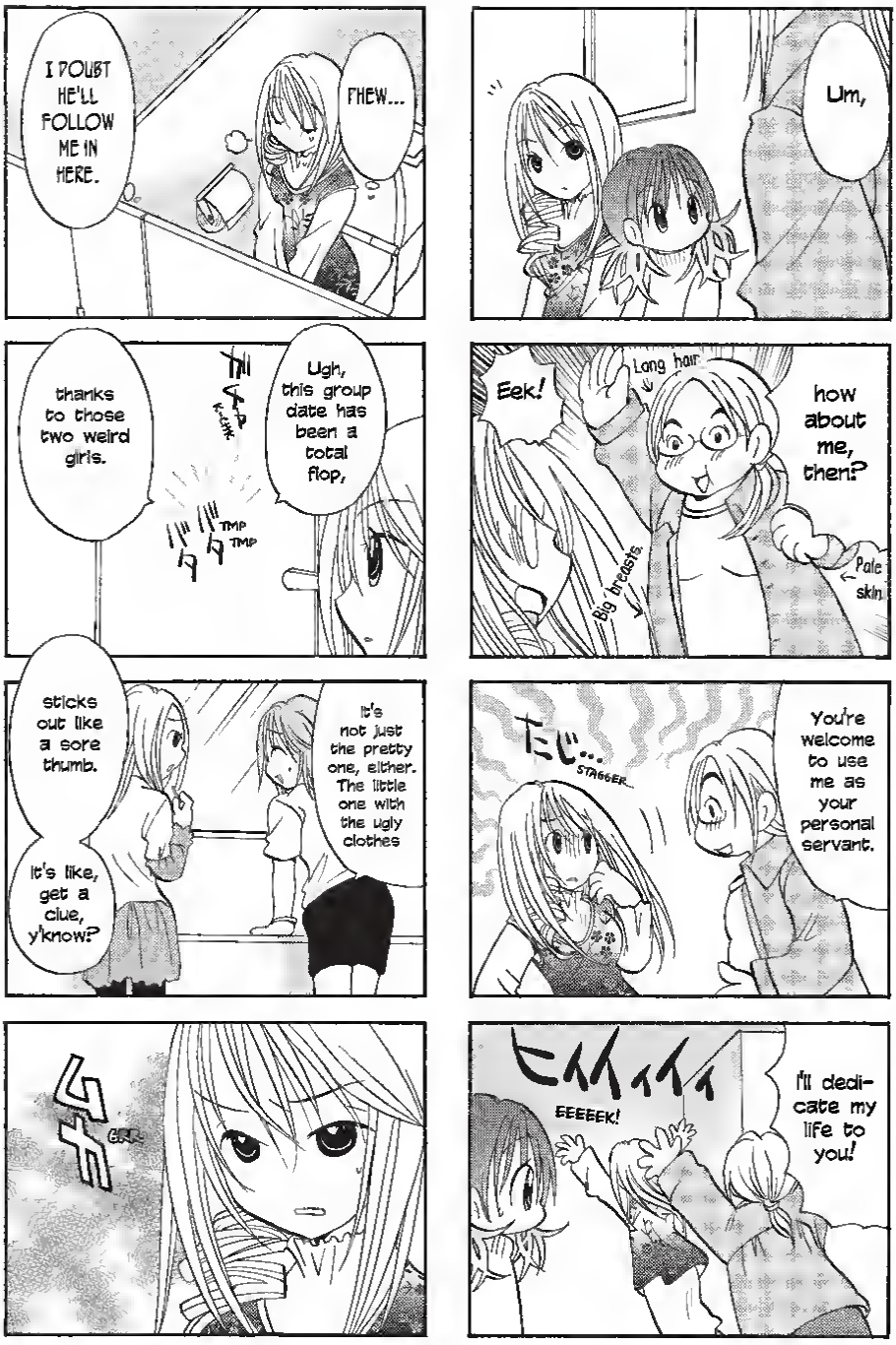
Wow,
amaz-ing...

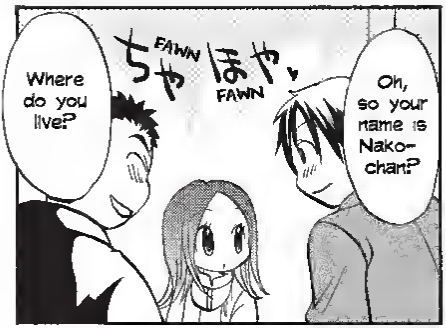

What's your type?
My type?

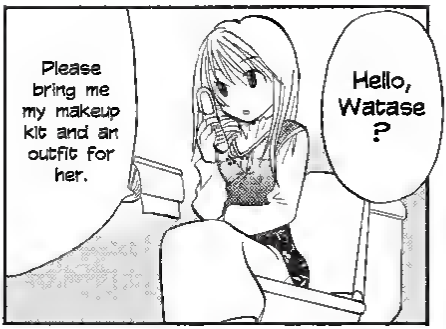

NOBODY HERE
IS REALLY MY TYPE.

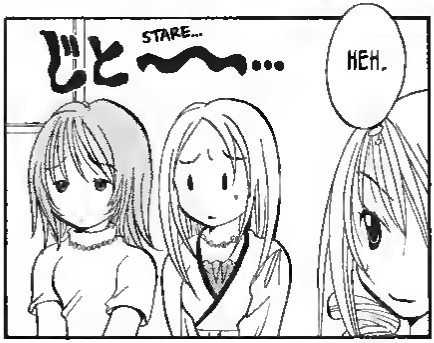

Someone with a mild personality,
long hair, a light complexion,
and fairly large breasts --
SILENCE...

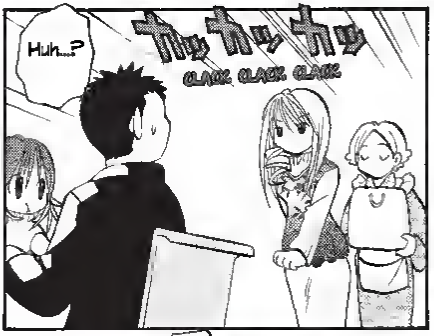

NEITHER OF THEM ARE PAYING ANY ATTENTION TO THE GUYS.
STARE...

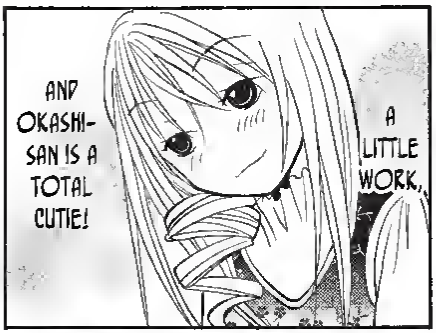

I DOUBT HE'LL FOLLOW ME IN HERE.
PHEW...
Um,
thanks to those two weird girls.
Ugh, this group date has been a total flop,
TMP TMP
Eek!
Long hair
how about me, then?
Pale skin
Big breasts
sticks out like a sore thumb.
It's like, get a clue, y'know?
It's not just the pretty one, either. The little one with the ugly clothes
たじ…
STAGGER
You're welcome to use me as your personal servant.
GRL
EEEEEK!
I'll dedicate my life to you!


Where do you live?
ちゃ FAWN ほや FAWN
Oh, so your name is Nako-chan?


Hello, Watase?
Please bring me my makeup kit and an outfit for her.

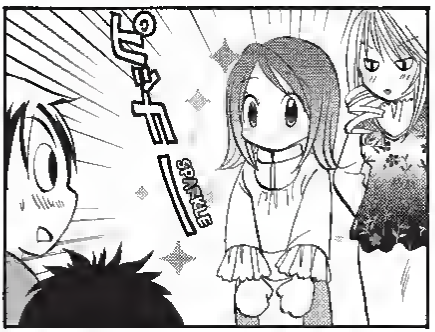

じと STARE...
HEH.

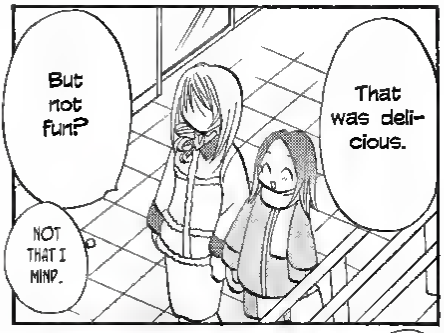

Huh...?
カッカッカッ CLACK CLACK CLACK


AND OKASHI-SAN IS A TOTAL CUTIE!
A LITTLE WORK,

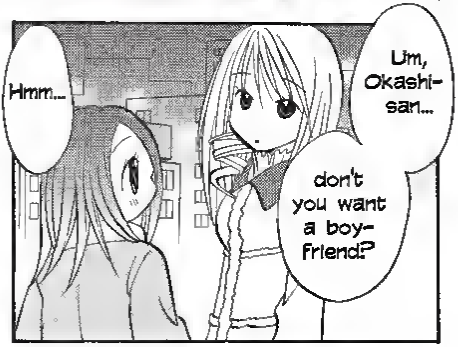
Huh? Wait a...
ズルズル DRAG DRAG
Come with us. We're going to the powder room.

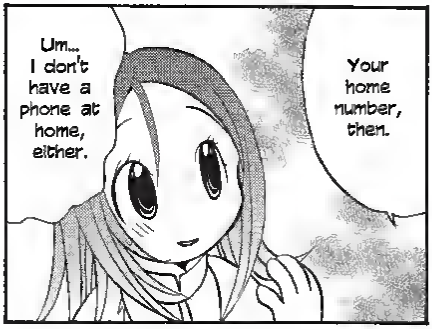
BURNING WITH JEALOUSY
やきもち
ムラ GRR GRR
I JUST DON'T GET HER...

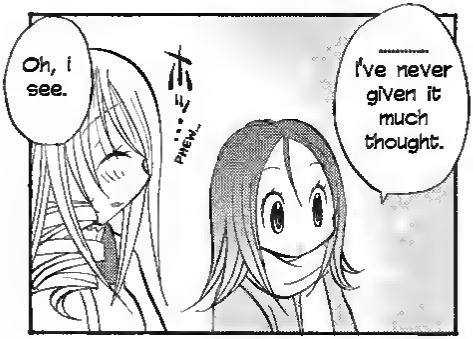

ピキーン SPARKLE

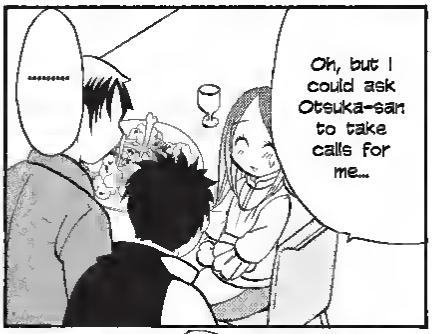

That was delicious.
But not fun?
NOT THAT I MIND.

Can I have your cell number?
I'm sorry, but I don't have one.


Um, Okashi-san...
don't you want a boy-friend?
Hmm...


Your home number, then.
Um... I don't have a phone at home, either.

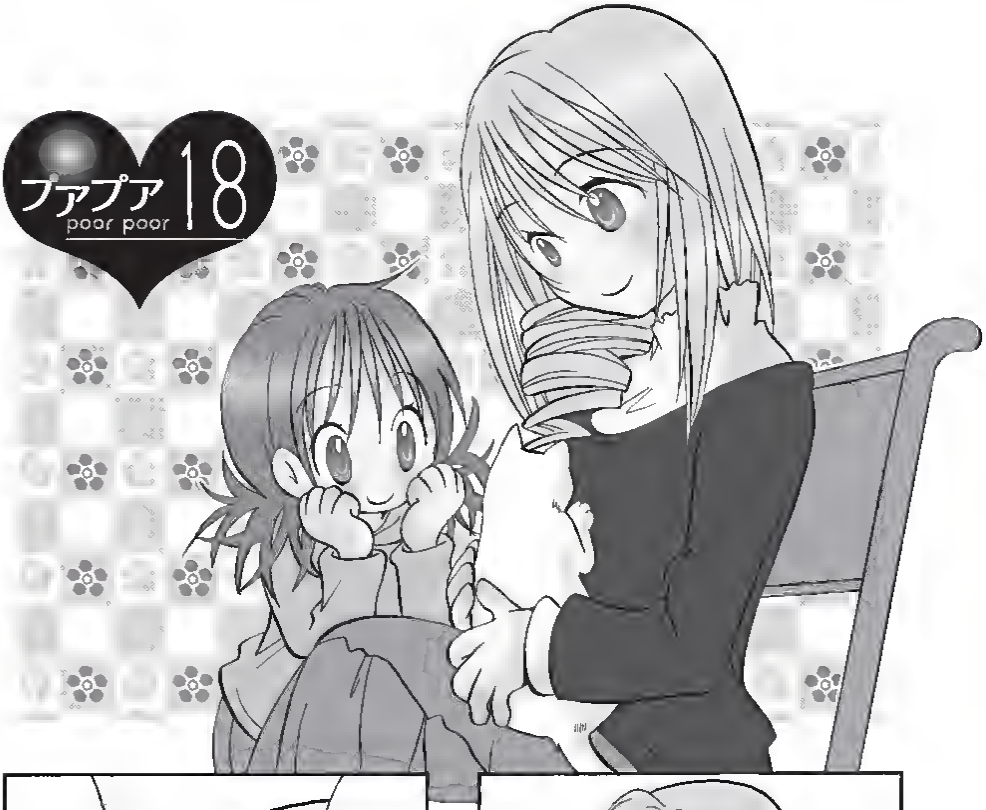

I've never given it much thought.
PHEW...
Oh, I see.


Oh, but I could ask Otsuka-san to take calls for me...
.....

I WANT TO KEEP BUTTING IN, AT LEAST FOR A WHILE LONGER.
I CAN'T JUST LEAVE HER TO HER OWN DEVICES.

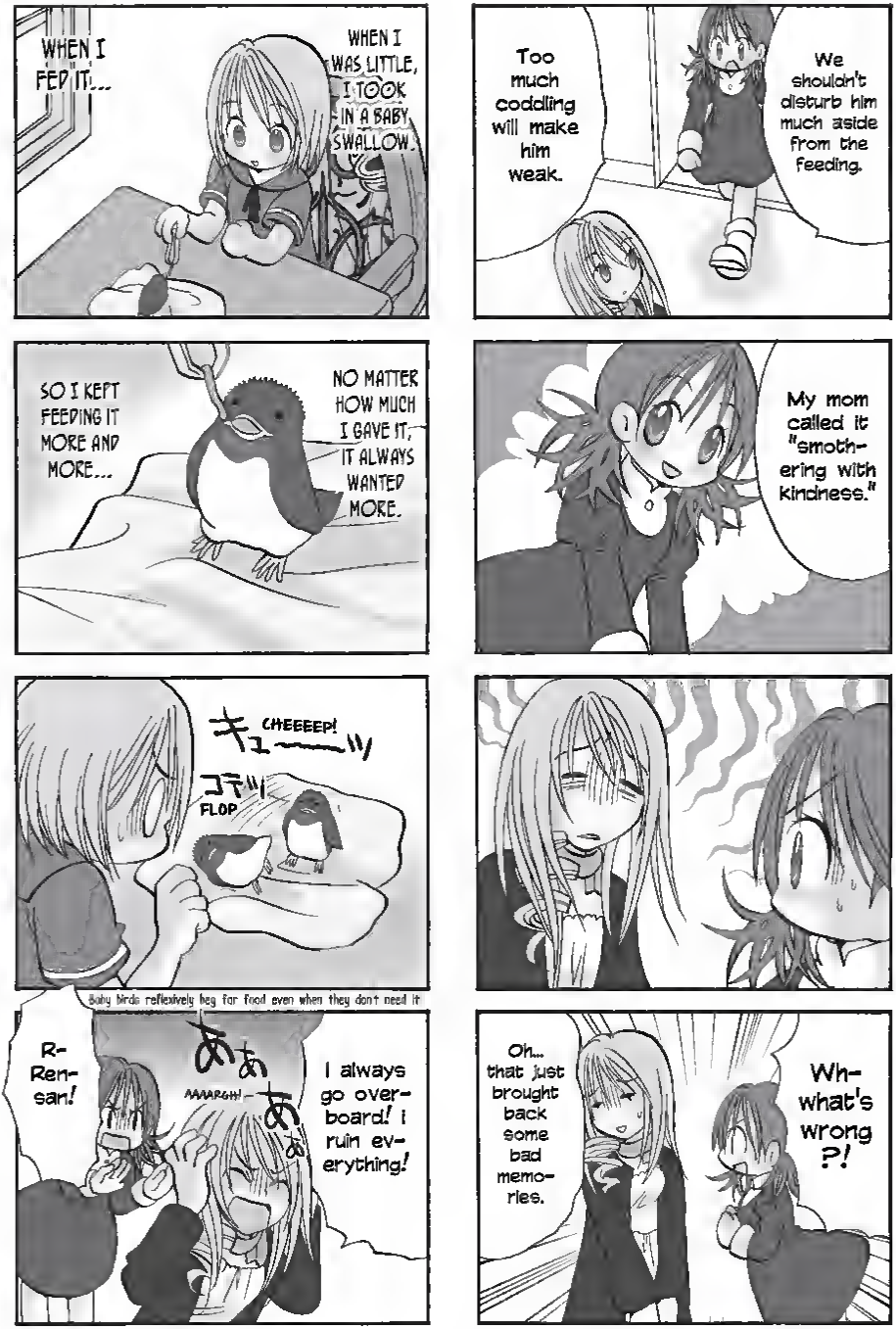
Phew, now I can eat in peace.
PHEW...
SMOKE AWAY

フアプア 18
poor poor

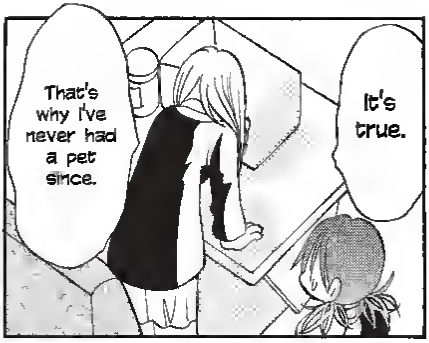


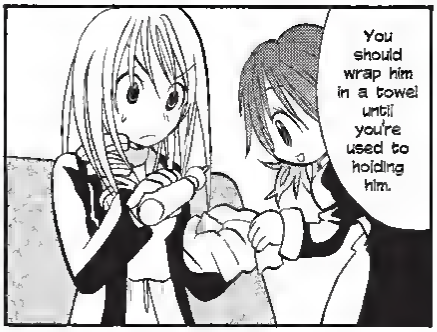
I'll put a fleece blanket in a cardboard box.
I bought some special milk and a bottle, too.
I-I never knew that kittens had such small ears.
So tiny...
They do. You really didn't know that?
Oooh...
SUCK SUCK
Um, I'm sorry to ask this...
I've only ever seen them in pet shops.
You must have done this before.
When I was growing up, there were always kittens around.
but is it okay
If I keep him in the office today?
Cats like small, dark places with lots of crevices, you know...
FALLING APART...
So you've been poor all your life?
Let's pick out a name first!
That can wait until everything else is taken care of.

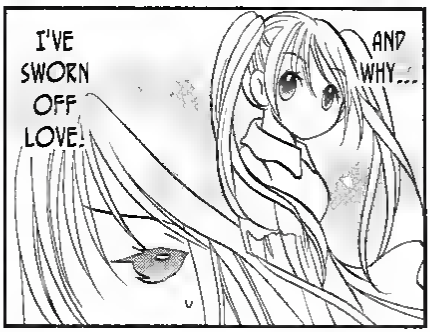
I need to feed him every 4 hours.
Every 4 hours ?!
WELL,
I'LL JUST TAKE A QUICK LOOK...
SNEAK...
We won't be able to get much work done today.
I'm sorry.
.....
.....
FRET FRET
NUDGE
SNEAK...
D-do you think it's feeding time yet?
Not for another half hour.
Not focused on work at all.
Eek!
MEW
MEW
MEW
MEW

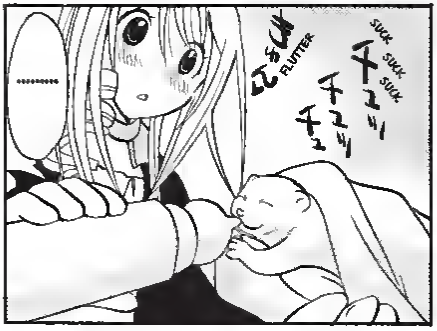

WHEN I FED IT...
WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I TOOK IN A BABY SWALLOW.
Too much coddling will make him weak.
We shouldn't disturb him much aside from the feeding.
SO I KEPT FEEDING IT MORE AND MORE...
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I GAVE IT, IT ALWAYS WANTED MORE.
My mom called it "smothering with kindness."
キュ～～!!
CHEEEEP!
コテ!!
FLOP
Baby birds reflexively beg for food even when they don't need it
R-Ren-san!
あぁ
AAAARGH!
あぁ
I always go overboard! I ruin everything!
Oh... that just brought back some bad memories.
Wh-what's wrong?!

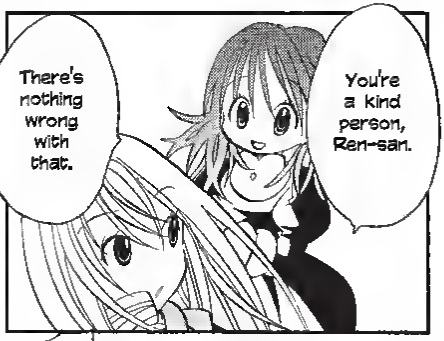
could I... feed the kitten?
Um... Okashi-san,

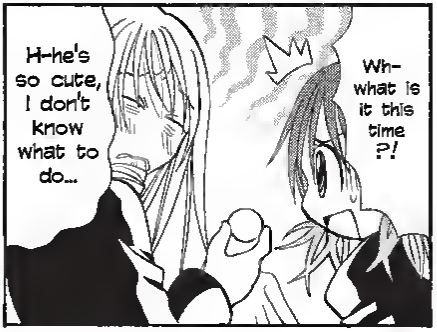

That's why I've never had a pet since.
It's true.

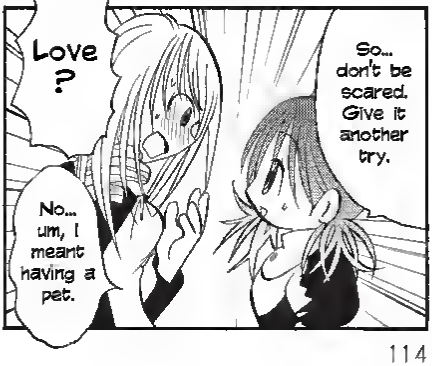

You should wrap him in a towel until you're used to holding him.


I'VE SWORN OFF LOVE!
AND WHY...


.....
FLUTTER
SUCK SUCK SUCK


There's nothing wrong with that.
You're a kind person, Ren-san.

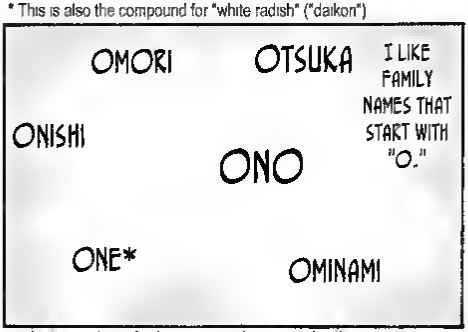

H-he's so cute, I don't know what to do...
Wh-what is it this time?!

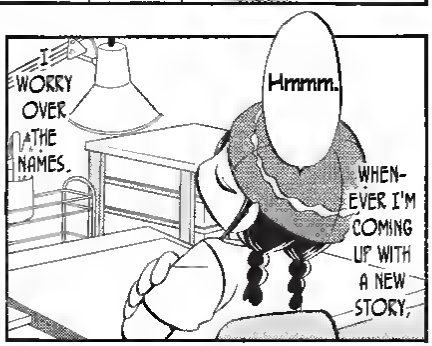

Love?
So... don't be scared. Give it another try.
No... um, I meant having a pet.

No, you should be fine if you study up first.
I'll teach you everything.
So, what are you going to do with him?
I'll take care of him until he's weaned from the bottle.
You're a lucky little kitty!
Ren-san is nice. You'll be happy with her.
mew.
Then I'll look for someone to adopt him...
and if I can't find anyone, I'll take him in myself.
THANK YOU,
OKASHI-SAN!
I...
could take him in.
HALF A YEAR LATER...
I told you not to spoil him!
B-but he begs for food so much!
puppy
U-uhhh...
I knew it! You don't trust me!

Afterword Manga

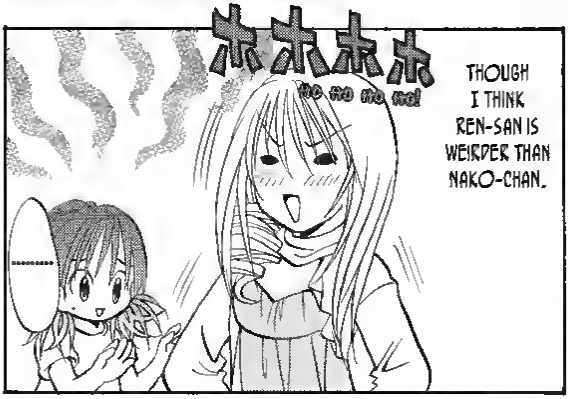
* This is also the compound for "white radish" ("daikon")

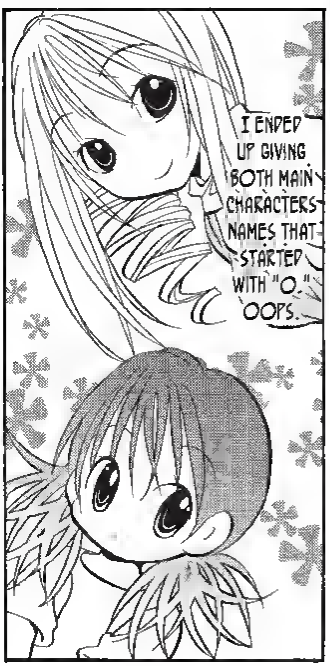




I give a lot of characters the same family names, too

*"Otsukare" is part of a ritual expression said to someone who has finished work for the day





HER NOBILITY... OR IS IT HER GORGEOUSNESS?
HMM... THE BRAID TAKES AWAY FROM
I EVEN DID IT FOR THE COVER ILLUSTRATION.
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT ABOUT PUTTING REN-SAN'S HAIR IN A BRAID.
SO I HASTILY CHANGED IT TO CURLS INSTEAD.
Rich girls gotta have curls!!
I REALIZED SHE LOOKED CUTER WITH STRAIGHT HAIR, SO I SWITCHED TO THAT.
NAKO-CHAN'S HAIR STARTED OUT WAVIER, BUT AS I WAS DRAWING HER,
I stumble along through a process of trial and error.
See you in volume 2!

Poor Poor Lips (1)
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